

ECOLOGY AND KINSHIP:
A STUDY OF VARYING PATTERNS IN THE ORGANIZATION
OF DOMESTIC GROUPS AMONG THE SEWA MENDE OF SIERRA LEONE

M. C. Jedrej

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Abstract of Thesis

This thesis takes up E. R. Leach's proposition that 'economics is prior to kinship' and attempts to demonstrate for a selected society in Sierra Leone that while 'economics', that is ecology, is a factor in constraining behaviour the kinship structure is also, and not necessarily any less significant. In pursuing this general theme certain issues relating to cognatic kinship systems, property and domestic group organization are considered.

Chapter I critically examines Leach's monograph Pul Eliya and concludes that Leach does not demonstrate his thesis satisfactorily and that his handling of the Sinhalese cognatic kinship system points to the need for more adequate analytical tools. It is also argued that the analysis of domestic group organization offers an apt means of examining the interrelation of ecology and kinship structure. Attention is drawn to recent work dealing with the changing morphology of domestic groups over time not only in terms of the developmental cycle, the result of bio-human events but also in terms of what has been called here the agricultural cycle which arises out of the seasonal variations which regulate the productive tasks and labour requirements of the farming household. In the analysis of cognatic kinship systems it is argued that the dichotomy 'restricted/unrestricted descent' is more useful than the 'unilineal/cognatic descent' formulation.

Chapter II describes the geographical background of Sewa Mende

land and the two major ecological regions are established, the implications of which in terms of their exploitation, that is land use systems, are brought out and discussed in detail in Chapter III.

Chapter IV presents a descriptive analysis of Sewa Mende kinship structure and related elements. The problematic question of the devolution of property, especially land rights, is alluded to.

In Chapter V the resultant organizational patterns of Sewa Mende domestic groups are analysed as they operate within the two parameters of kinship and ecology. Here particular attention is paid to the annual and recurrent, that is cyclical, changes in domestic group morphology arising out of the differential labour requirements of the land use systems. Two principal syndromes are revealed corresponding to the two major ecological regions. But while some of the differences and similarities could be accounted for directly, through a consideration of corporate group organization and property is necessary to take the analysis further.

Chapters VI and VII, each dealing with one of the two syndromes, attempt to demonstrate that the respective systems of land use and the kinship structure are resolved in fundamentally differing modalities of land tenure. It is concluded that, for the Sewa Mende, birth rather than death precipitates the problem of inheritance and that while in one syndrome kinship and land are integral parts of the property system distinguishable only at the analytical level, in the other syndrome these aspects are divorced and empirically distinct. Such considerations complete the account of domestic group organization among the Sewa Mende.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

No attempt has been made in this work to disguise individuals or locations. Anyone wishing to excerpt material should first consult the author.

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M. C. Jedrej

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation has two aspects. It may be considered as an addition to the ethnography of Sierra Leone but it is also concerned with certain current theoretical issues in academic social anthropology and has some general implications. In this introductory chapter these two features, especially the latter, will be elaborated in order to define the points of articulation within social anthropology in general and the objectives of the thesis in particular. Having done so certain topics relating to fieldwork will be discussed, concluding with a brief description of the layout of the dissertation.

The search for socio-cultural watersheds is a notoriously arbitrary business which, as one eminent anthropologist has remarked, if "pushed to the limit we should be able to show that every village community throughout the world constitutes a distinct society which is distinguishable as a type from any other."¹ In view of this pertinent objection and the fact that there are few references in published material to a people called 'Sewa Mende' it will be necessary to clarify some basic elements of ethnography. The material presented here relates to the social organization of the people inhabiting the seaboard of the Southern Province of Sierra Leone from approximately the firth of the Sewa river to that of the Moa. If the ethnographic map of Sierra Leone is referred to it will be seen

1. E. R. Leach, Rethinking Anthropology, London, 1961, P.3.

that this area comprises Bullom (or Sherbro), Krim, Vai and Gallinas people.¹ To the north of this region are found the Mende. But, whatever the situation may have been in the past, these distinctions have little or no empirical validity at present. By the criteria of language the inhabitants of the area are homogeneously Mende speaking and there are no traces of cultural discontinuity within the area. Only a few old people can speak Bullom or Krim and then only on request. I have never heard anybody in the region conversing in Bullom or one of the other languages spontaneously. H. U. Hall found that Sherbro 'culture' existed only on Sherbro Island and to a lesser extent on the mainland around Shenge after a tour in 1937.² My own researches confirm that only on Sherbro Island can there be said to be Bullom people. The Mende tribal boundary extends, then, south to the coast.

Nevertheless the Mende can only be said to form a uniform socio-cultural group at a very general level. This is recognized by Professor K. L. Little who, in his monograph, writes

"the inhabitants of 'Middle' Mende country, or Sewa Mende, as they are called sometimes, on account of their proximity to the Sewa river, regard themselves as somewhat different from the Kpaa Mende as well as those born in the eastern part of the country."³

I have accordingly used the term Sewa Mende and extended its area of reference to label the people under study here.

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1. M. McCulloch, The Peoples of the Sierra Leone Protectorate, International African Institute, London, 1950.
 2. H. U. Hall, The Sherbro of Sierra Leone, Pennsylvania, 1938.
 3. K. L. Little, The Mende of Sierra Leone, London, 1951, P.76.

Systematic documentation of Mende ethnography begins with the work of S. Hofstra who carried out fieldwork among the eastern Mende.¹ In 1951 Little published his monograph on the Mende whose "main aim in undertaking the investigation was to provide a general description of Mende culture".² This was in many ways ^a pioneering work since it brought to bear on Mende society the powerful methods of the functional approach of social anthropology, clearing the way for more limited but deeper analyses of certain aspects of Mende society. ^{it has} At the same time made possible the concentration of work on those differences already referred to within Mendeland. This dissertation is based on researches that have taken full advantage of this opportunity.

As an empirical contribution to Sierra Leone ^{studies} the present work does not parallel that of Professor Little's: it is not an ethnography of a hitherto unknown tribe or society. Nevertheless fieldwork was carried out in a part of Mendeland previously unvisited by an anthropologist or ethnographer or at least no published material has emerged from such researches. This is perhaps due to the region's general inaccessability.

The analysis of the social organization presented in the following pages is in its generality limited to a small part of Mendeland. Exactly

1. S. Hofstra, 'The social significance of the oil palm in the life of the Mendi', Internationales Archiv fur Ethnographie, Band 34, 1937; 'The ancestral spirits of the Mendi', Internationales Archiv fur Ethnographie, Band 39, 1941; 'The belief among the Mendi in non ancestral spirits and its relation to a case of parricide', Internationales Archiv fur Ethnographie, Band 40, 1942.

2. Little, op. cit., P.11.

where it ceases to be applicable is impossible to delineate but as one travels north one does reach a point where it will no longer hold and one has therefore, pace Leach, to make a distinction however arbitrary. In labelling the peoples so distinguished, I have after some thought, used the term Sewa Mende rather than Bullom (or Sherbro) despite the fact that the people will sometimes refer to themselves as Bullom in the context of the sub-divisions of Mendeland and that the area is already labelled Bullom in contemporary maps.¹ In the first place there is a radically distinct and vital Bullom culture on Sherbro Island and secondly the term Sewa Mende has already, albeit limited, currency and implies a more accurate designation of cultural affinities.

Although the work is basically an analysis of certain aspects of the social system of the Sewa Mende and as such has an ethnographic context, it is also at the analytical level in a context of theoretical assumptions. Some of these must perforce remain assumptions while others are elevated to the status of hypotheses, the elaboration and validation of which form the principal themes of this dissertation. It is to a consideration of such theoretical issues of general implication that we must now turn.

The theoretical point of departure is E. R. Leach's proposition

1. McCulloch, op. cit.; also, Little, op. cit., P.62.

"to regard economic relations as prior to kinship relations"¹ or, more cogently,

"it is the inflexibility of topography - of water and land and climate - which most of all determines what people shall do. The interpretation of ideal legal rules is at all times limited by such crude nursery facts as that water evaporates and runs down hill. It is in this sense that I want to insist that the student of social structure must never forget that the constraints² of economics are prior to the constraints of morality and law."²

Leach, in this work is not, however, exhuming the notion of geographical determinism but emphasising the need to consider geographical and physiographical elements as relevant factors, among others, in accounting for human behaviour. As Leach points out "the issues at stake are far reaching. If anthropologists come to look upon kinship as a parameter which can be studied in isolation they will always be led, by a series of strictly logical steps, to think of human society as composed of equilibrium systems structured according to ideal legal rules. Economic activities come to appear of minor significance and the study of social adaptation to changing circumstances becomes impossible."³

In this thesis we shall pursue Leach's proposition in the analysis of Sewa Mende society. There would however be little grounds for such a study for its own sake if Leach in his monograph, Pul Eliya, had firmly demonstrated that economics is prior to kinship, beyond reaffirming the postulate in a West Africa context. However, it is suggested here that Leach fails to establish satisfactorily the priority of ecology over kinship,

1. E. R. Leach, Pul Eliya, A Village in Ceylon, A Study of Land Tenure and Kinship, Cambridge, 1961, P.8.

2. ibid, P.9.

3. ibid., PP. 7-8.

and in fact, that his own material points to a contrary conclusion.

Let us deal with the contention that Leach fails in his monograph Pul Eliya to demonstrate the thesis that economics, or ecology is prior to kinship. Before doing so we must be quite clear about the significance of the threefold distinction, 'economics', 'kinship' and 'what-people-do'. The term kinship has in fact a wider connotation than the term normally implies. Leach is engaged here in a polemical argument with Professor M. Fortes and in particular with the latter's theoretical position as stated in his paper 'The Structure of Unilineal Descent Groups.'¹ In this paper Fortes is concerned with the elaboration of the function of kinship in the ordering of primitive societies and especially with the significance of unilineal descent. It is the implications of the statement made therein, ^{viz,} "why descent rather than locality or some other principle forms the basis of these corporate groups is a question that needs more study."², to which Leach takes exception. However, when Leach uses the term kinship it takes on a wider meaning. Thus:

"If anthropologists come to look upon kinship as a parameter which can be studied in isolation they will always be led by a series of strictly logical steps to think of human society as composed of equilibrium systems structured according to ideal legal rules."

And, in criticising the work of Fortes:

"To the more sceptical it might appear that, if the evidence were specific and more historical, the discrepancies between

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1. M. Fortes, 'The structure of unilineal descent groups', American Anthropologist, Vol. 55, 1953.
 2. ibid, P.30.
 3. Leach, op. cit., PP. 7-8.

the ideal of patrilineal descent and the facts of empirical behaviour might well become more prominent In later writing Fortes has treated the concept of social structure in a different way. In the Tallensi books structure is a matter of jural rules, the ideal form of which can be represented as a paradigm."

Further quotation of various passages is not necessary to show that when Leach claims that economics is prior to kinship, kinship is the social structure, "the ideal order of jural relation".²

The term economics is, as we shall see the most equivocal of all. Although, as we have seen in the passage already quoted 'economics' would appear to refer to such immutable facts as that "water evaporates and flows down hill" and the "inflexibility of topography" the paragraph from which that passage was excerpted opens with the statement that "the Pul Eliya community does not only operate within an established framework of legal rules, it also exists within a particular man-made ecological environment."³ Man-made ecological environments and inflexible topographies one would imagine to be mutually exclusive and hence difficult to accommodate in the single category of economics. If we allow this semantic dexterity and follow Leach through his analysis of Pul Eliya social organization we shall see how it is used to produce certain dividends.

'What-people-do' is relatively straight forward. It refers to the actual empirical behaviour of real people as revealed by simple observation or more sophisticated statistical techniques. It is this

1. ibid., P.8.

2. ibid., P.9.

3. ibid., P.9.

phenomenon and its explanation that comprises one of the tasks of social anthropology and around which the debate concerning the priority of economics or kinship debate is focussed.

We have already noted the seeds of contradiction within the term economics and as the exposition proceeds the 'immutable topography' aspect falls into abeyance and economics becomes the organization of the Old Field in Pul Eliya and the system of water control by the traditional means of karahankota,¹ that is, the man-made ecological environment.

"In chapter V I sought to show that the formal elaboration and symmetry of the baga system in the traditional-style land tenure of the Old Field has the effect of constraining the kinship organization of the community which owns the land. In Pul Eliya I argued, people adapt their kinship allegiances to fit the topographical facts of the Old Field rather than the other way about. I also showed that in the only recorded instance of a major change in the Old Field layout the immediate consequences for the associated kinship group were catastrophic."²

Apart from the further confusion of topography and the organization of the Old Field Leach would appear to have made his case, that people adapt their kinship allegiances to fit the topographical facts of the Old Field, rather than the other way about. However two points must be noted. In the first place, we were told earlier that "despite tremendous empirical changes, the ideal order is still close to that described by Ievers nearly sixty years ago."³ But since 'kinship' in the opening chapters, as we have seen, referred to the more general ideal order, the social structure, the 'kinship allegiances' of the above passage

1. ibid., P. 145 sqq.

2. ibid., P. 217.

3. ibid., P.9.

must refer to a different order of phenomenon. Indeed, as Chapter V shows 'kinship allegiances' are 'what-people-do', the facts of empirical behaviour. It is important to realise that Leach has not shown that the ideal order of jural relations has given way to the facts of topography, he has, and conclusively, shown that the facts of empirical behaviour are constrained by the organization of the Old Field which could be regarded as economic in the sense of 'inflexible topography' but it is clearly much more than that. Moreover, to describe the organization of the Old Field as 'a man-made-ecological-environment' hardly does justice to its organizational complexity. At a certain analytical level, it is suggested here, it can be regarded as a social fact; it is, to use Leach's own phrase "a visual model of their community".¹ Now when Leach uses the concept model it can only refer to the ideal order or social structure, that is the 'kinship' which we encountered at the outset, and it is this order of phenomenon that constrains the behaviour of the inhabitants of Pul Eliya. The transition is remarkable and is tantamount to a volte face.

What then is left of Leach's thesis? In fact a work of considerable merit and an outstanding example of sustained analysis according to the principles of structural anthropology. The 'economics is prior to kinship' postulate turns out to be a red-herring. Leach set out to controvert the implications of the theory of unilineal descent, exemplified in the paper by Fortes, and this he does with a deal of conviction. In the Sinhalese village of Pul Eliya the patterns of empirical behaviour

1. ibid., P.303.

are directly related to the principles of the system that constitute the Old Field complex, a system that is substantially distinct from any system of unilineal descent.

Nevertheless one cannot but sympathize with the postulate "economics is prior to kinship" even if only on intuitive grounds. One can defy the laws of incest perhaps not without impunity but one cannot even begin to set about defying the law of gravity. An Eskimo may kill a seal and contravene a ritual injunction but magico-religious sanctions are clearly not required to prevent him cultivating oil palms around his igloo.

If we are to establish exactly the significance of ecology as a factor in constraining social action, a situation wherein this is the only variable should provide a better test case than that of Pul Eliya where the ecological factor is constant. Sewa Mendeland is admirably suitable for this task since within a homogeneous cultural context there is a relatively infertile zone and on the other an extremely fertile and mechanically ploughed zone. These features can be regarded within the context of Sewa Mende civilization as immutable. My question is then, how do these factors affect the patterns of social organization if at all? If the features of empirical behaviour are related to the social structure or ideal order then one would expect a corresponding uniformity at the empirical level throughout the region. But if, as is in fact the case, ecology is a significant variable then corresponding variations should be ascertainable. However, in the light of our critical examination of Leach's monograph we shall reserve judgement as to the priority of one factor or another and shall analyse the interrelation of ecology and social structure

as they both relate to the resultant pattern of empirical behaviour. During the course of this exposition of the dominant theme, the analysis brings out certain points that are relevant to more specific issues in anthropological theory, especially as regards the nature and function of kinship, particularly cognatic systems and the refinement of some analytical concepts in dealing with the organization of domestic groups. But before going on to consider these items it is perhaps necessary to pause and discuss certain methodological issues.

So far we have used terms such as "social structure", "organization", "ecology", "patterns of empirical behaviour", "ideal order", "model" without attempting to define their respective analytical statuses. The methodological assumptions of sociology are fraught with logical problems. This dissertation is not a methodological exposition but an exercise in pragmatic anthropology and as such it would be out of place if not wholly impracticable to set about answering such questions as "What is social structure?" and allied issues, definitively. With these reservations in mind I shall set about clarifying what is meant by the use of certain concepts in the following pages.

In our analysis of Leach's study of Pul Eliya a tripartite division of phenomena emerged namely "economics", "empirical behaviour" and "kinship" or what I would rather label, ecology, social organization and social structure.

Ecology refers simply, in this context, to the mode of life of the people. The Sewa Mende are sedentary agriculturalists and hence

a study of their ecology is one concerned with land and land-use systems. In this it differs somewhat from Leach's "economics" which as we have seen relates to field organization. Here land use refers to the techniques of exploitation of various resources.

The term social structure, however, is perhaps more problematical. Much of the debate is largely semantic and arises out of the fact that it is a general and abstract concept. Anything that is not wholly amorphous has a structure. Thus in the study of social phenomena one can, for the purposes of analysis, postulate a structure at any level. For Levi-Strauss "the term social structure has nothing to do with empirical reality but with the models which are built up after it."¹ This use of the concept may be contrasted with that advocated by Radcliffe-Brown where structures are not the outcome of a process of analysis but the initial subject of study. "Direct observation does reveal to us that these human beings are connected by a complex of social relations. I use the term 'social structure' to denote this network of actually existing relations."²

Levi-Strauss, however, in the paper cited does not appear to tackle the problem of what constitutes the data that may usefully be subjected to structural analysis. Although he does say "it will be enough to state at this time that social relations consist of the raw materials out of which models making up the social structure are built,"³ it is

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1. C. Levi-Strauss, 'Social Structure', in Anthropology Today, A. L. Kroeber, (ed.), Chicago, 1953, P. 525.
 2. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, Structure and Function in Primitive Society, London, 1952, P. 190.
 3. Levi-Strauss, op. cit., P. 525.

clear that we are meant to suspend disbelief while his exposition may proceed. Towards the end of his essay, which is largely concerned with the methodological attributes of social structure he notes that "the field of myth, ritual and religion seems nevertheless to be one of the most fruitful for the study of social structure"¹. For Leach, however, at least in Pul Eliya it would appear to be the "ideal order of jural relations". Traditionally in anthropology "law and politics" usually form a separate field of study from "religion" as is manifest in the usual break down of chapters in an ethnographic monograph. To get at the root of their apparent divergences, which Firth² would appear to confirm as having some basis, we must consider the work of Durkheim, the acknowledged source of inspiration. Durkheim, by a process of polemic and analogy produced the label "collective representations" for an order of phenomena that may for the moment be described as the ideas prevailing in a group at any given moment but to a certain extent independent of the constituent members. Durkheim appreciated that the key methodological problem was one of operational definition in order that collective representations may be readily identified and in doing so he selected the factor of obligation and constraint, most obviously manifest in jural rules. But in a footnote to his essay on "The Collective and Individual Conscience"³ he writes "We would like here to correct a false interpretation that has been put upon our thought. When we said that obligation and constraint are the characteristics of social facts we had no intention of giving a

1. Levi-Strauss, ibid., P. 548.

2. R. Firth, 'Social Organization and Social Change', in the Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, Vol. 84, 1954, P.5.

3. E. Durkheim, Sociology and Philosophy, (trans., D. F. Pocock), London, 1953.

summary explanation of the latter. We wished simply to point out a convenient sign by which the sociologist can recognize the facts falling within his field."¹ Thus jural rules are part of the complex of collective representations, but the latter are not necessarily coterminous with the former. Social structure as used by such authors as Lévi-Strauss, Leach, Dumont and others, is primarily concerned with the analysis of collective representations.

With the isolation of collective representations and appreciation that "if representations, once they exist, continue to exist in themselves if they have the power to react directly upon each other and to combine according to their own laws, they are then realities which, while maintaining an intimate relation with the substratum are to a certain extent independent of it,"² further work proceeded in two ways. Either substantial problems concerning collective representations per se could be tackled, or the intimate relation with the substratum, that is explaining the patterns of empirical behaviour in terms of their relation to the collective representations of the society. Durkheim at one time or another tackled both issues. Lévy-Bruhl notably concentrated on the first aspect in which he has been followed at the present time by Lévi-Strauss and Needham who have imported the powerful methodological tool of structural analysis. Leach, like Durkheim, perhaps has variously tackled the problems of empirical behaviour and related collective representations as well as certain topics concerned with the conceptual aspect of society.

1. Durkheim, ibid., P.25.

2. ibid., P.23.

Durkheim's dichotomy between the "substratum" of society and its corresponding collective representations is carried over into an empirical division of things sacred and things profane. Leach¹ has criticized this position and usefully improved upon it, suggesting that "techniques and ritual, profane and sacred, do not denote types of action but aspects of almost any kind of action".²

These considerations, then, form the theoretical and methodological background to Chapter IV of this dissertation, in which, to persist in the rather archaic term, the collective representations of the Sewa Mende are analysed. This analysis is not taken to a high degree of abstraction since the principal concern is with certain patterns of empirical behaviour and not the collective representations per se.

Chapters V, VI, and VII are all headed 'Social Organization' implying some substantial difference from Chapter IV. Social Organization, as will now be apparent, is used here to label that order of phenomena which has so far been variously described as "empirical patterns of behaviour", "statistical rates" and so on. The terminological distinction between structure and organization employed in this work is inspired by Firth's essay on 'Social Organization and Social Change' and though it may be considered a rather arbitrary matter, the more permanent or static connotations of the term structure as against the dynamics implied by the term organization renders these terms apt labels for the respective levels of the Sewa Mende social system presented here. Firth defines social

1. E. R. Leach, Political Systems of Highland Burma, London, 1954, P.13.

2. Firth, op. cit.

organization as referring to "concrete social activity. This activity is not random; it is ordered, arranged in inter related sequences. Such ordering implies not simply chance patterns but reference to socially defined ends one may describe social organization, then, as the working arrangements of society."¹

In view of the substantive differences between these orders of society different analytical tools are required. The techniques of structural analysis are of little use in tackling problems of social organization. In the development of a satisfactory approach to the analysis of social action in anthropology the work of Barth, whose standpoint is lucidly summarised in his paper 'Models of Social Organization'², is notable. Basically, Barth is concerned with the methodological problem of explaining patterns of empirical behaviour. "Explanation is not achieved by a description of the patterns of regularity, no matter how meticulous and adequate, nor by replacing this description by other abstractions congruent with it, but by exhibiting what makes the pattern, i.e. certain processes."³ Barth's generative models of processes will not only provide a more satisfactory understanding and explanation but they will also "facilitate comparative analysis as a methodological equivalent of experiment."⁴ Barth has tackled a fundamental methodological problem in sociology and his methods are perhaps fraught with difficulties of implementation. It is perhaps significant that Weber when facing the

1. Firth, ibid., P.10.

2. F. Barth, Models of Social Organization, Occasional Paper No.23, Royal Anthropological Institute, 1966.

3. ibid., P.2.

4. ibid., P.v.

same problem had recourse to a method of apprehending and understanding (Verstehen) the motivations of actors as a result of his appreciation of the substantial differences between the natural sciences and social science. Secondly, problems concerning social organization, as has been indicated above, are not the only ones that face anthropologists and even whether "they are our main field of study"¹ seems a matter of opinion. It is important to realise that Barth's contribution is relevant only to this field despite his implicit but rather sanguine holistic approach. Thus when he attempts to tackle questions relating to the level of collective representations through the concept of value his position becomes untenable and, as he himself admits, rests on "a chicken and egg kind of argument".² It is highly unlikely that the analysis of social organization using interactional concepts will ever answer such problems as why do the Trobriand Islanders have four clans or why do Nuer men identify with oxen rather than bulls.³ Nevertheless, it will be seen that Barth's ideas have influenced the analysis of social organization and its relation to the social structure in the present work.

Having rather cursorily discussed the methodological standpoint from which the material presented here will be analysed we can now proceed to consider some of the more specific theoretical issues that will be taken up. At a general level as was mentioned earlier the thesis is

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1. ibid., P.2.
 2. ibid., P.17.
 3. cf. P. G. Riviere, "Social anthropology ... is concerned with making the concepts, attitudes, categories and principles of alien societies intelligible to members of one's own ... To achieve this with a society possessing complicated institutions is no mean feat ... and not one which any amount of concentration on behaviour alone will accomplish." Letter to Man (N.S.), Vol.3, No.2, June, 1968, P.315.
 4. ibid., P.26 sqq.

concerned to explore how the social organization of the Sewa Mende relates to both the social structure and ecology. That is, what kind of working arrangement is realised within the parameters of these two relatively immutable givens.

For practical reasons drastic selection from the whole range of Sewa Mende social organization had to be made and hence the analysis has concentrated on domestic groups and their organization. There are however certain pertinent theoretical considerations which were also taken into account. In the first place it is domestic groups among the Sewa Mende, and indeed among most preliterate societies, that form the units of production and are therefore immediately involved in ecology. Secondly, there has already developed in social anthropology a number of analytical concepts relating to domestic group organization, an undoubted advantage to the researcher. The theoretical advances made in the study of domestic group organization stem largely from the work of Fortes¹ which was later elaborated in a collection of essays entitled The Developmental Cycle in Domestic Groups.² Gulliver³ appears to have been working on parallel lines but brought into prominence the important aspect of property relations. In 1964 a collection of essays edited by Gray and

1. M. Fortes, The Web of Kinship among the Tallensi, London, 1949.
2. J. Goody(ed.), The Developmental Cycle in Domestic Groups, Cambridge, 1958.
3. P. H. Gulliver, The Family Herds; a Study of Two Pastoral Tribes of East Africa, the Jie and Turkana, London, 1955.

Gulliver¹ appeared in which some of this theoretical advance was consolidated. However, this last work, though Gray in his 'Introduction' notes that "the family is the principal locus of ecological processes"² and advises us that the objectives of the symposium are to analyse the material from a point of view that would stress the significance of property, resources and the time dimension,³ it does not follow up the implications of D. J. Stenning's essay on 'Household Viability among the Pastoral Fulani'. In none of the studies do annual and recurrent ecological variations or seasonal changes appear to figure as significant factors in domestic group organization. Variations in the size and composition of domestic groups appear to be solely related to the developmental process.

The possible relevance of the former factor was well brought out in Stenning's analysis of household viability among the Pastoral Fulani.⁴ Among the Fulani studied by Stenning there is a significant annual cycle of fission and accretion of households in accordance with the requirements of the pastoral economy and regular seasonal variations in the extent and availability of grazing.⁵ These processes within the Fulani domestic group occur over and above, though intimately related to, the long term developmental cycle of the domestic groups. This

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1. R. Gray and P. H. Gulliver (eds.), The Family Estate in Africa Studies in the Role of Property in Family Structure and Lineage Continuity, London, 1964.
 2. R. Gray, ibid., Introduction, P.5.
 3. R. Gray, ibid., P.1.
 4. D. J. Stenning, 'Household Viability among the Pastoral Fulani', in Goody (ed.), op. cit..
 5. ibid., PP.101 sqq.

organizational response is of considerable significance in the social system generally as Stenning shows. Now it would indeed be surprising if the Fulani were unique in featuring this organizational process. In fact as we shall see it is also of significance among the agricultural Sewa Mende.

Stenning's analysis of domestic group organization among the Fulani is resolved around the concept of household viability which he sees as affected by "firstly, regular seasonal variations in the demands of the pastoral economy. Secondly, it may be due to irregular natural hazards. Thirdly it may be due to the formal properties of the simple or compound family itself in relation to its means of subsistence, through the period of growth and dissolution."¹ Stenning goes on to show how domestic groups unite and disperse according to the contingencies arising out of these three factors.² The interesting feature of the households as they disperse or unite according to the need for viability is that the direction of fission and accretion is similar irrespective of whether the process is initiated by factors involving the human component or the ecological.³

Such annual changes in the size and composition of the domestic groups arise from the fact that though they are an integral unit they incorporate two distinct functions, production and consumption. Now while the consuming function is an ongoing process independent of

1. ibid., P.107.

2. ibid., P.101 sqq.

3. Stenning, op. cit., P.117.

seasonal or ecological cycles, this is not the case as regards production. Production is highly sensitive to ecological variations as they regulate the various tasks and hence labour requirements that constitute the land use systems. The annual cyclical changes that occur as a result of these factors I have termed the agricultural cycle in domestic groups in order to distinguish it from those processes normally referred to as the developmental cycle in domestic groups. The substantial analysis of this dynamic aspect is presented in Chapter V.

Thus we have postulated on the one hand the relatively immutable parameters of ecology and social structure and on the other the organizational processes of the units of consumption and production, that is, the households, on the other. The matrix linking these different levels in the social system is, among the Sewa Mende, the system of kinship and affinity. As a set of structural categories it is systematically related to other elements ranging from such concrete entities as land to intangibles such as ancestors and the spirits of the supernatural. But at the same time the kinship system defines the social relations of real people whose patterns of action constitute the organizational processes of the society.

During the course of this research kinship theory appeared to have polarised into what has been labelled alliance theory and descent theory, a debate which Schneider has examined and commented upon in some detail.¹ However, the Sewa Mende kinship system would not yield to

1. D. Schneider, 'Some Muddles in the Models, or How the System Really Works', in Association of Commonwealth Anthropologists Monograph No.1, The Relevance of Models in Social Anthropology, London, 1965.

analysis either in terms of alliance theory or descent theory. Thus localisation is a dominant concept in Sewa Mende society, a principle of organization which descent theory, as we have seen¹ does not consider significant. On the other hand while affinal relations are of great importance they could not bear the structural burden attributed to the systems on kinship and affinity analysed by Lévi-Strauss,² Leach³ and Needham⁴. This problem seems also to have appeared in Leach's work. Thus in his Malinowski Lecture he notes that "Since Tallensi may not marry any near kinswoman, however she be related, it is self evident that marriage here cannot serve as a relationship of perpetual political alliance in the sense which I have been discussing."⁵ But much more seriously it crops up in his monograph *Pul Eliya* which we have already examined in some detail.

Leach's discussion and analysis of marriage in this study is somewhat inconsistent. These difficulties, it would appear, arise out of an attempt to accommodate the data to an alliance theory of marriage. Thus the Sinhalese kinship category *pavula* is variously described as a "kindred defined as the descendants of a common ancestress"⁶

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1. Fortes, 1953, op. cit..
 2. C. Levi-Strauss, Les structures elementaires de la parente, Paris, 1949.
 3. E. R. Leach, 'The structural implications of matrilineal cross cousin marriage', Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, Vol. 81, 1951; Leach, 1954, op. cit..
 4. R. Needham, Structure and Sentiment, a Test Case in Social Anthropology, Chicago, 1962.
 5. Leach, 1961, op. cit..
 6. Leach, 1961, op. cit., P.112.

or as "a group of kinsmen allied together for some political purpose"¹ and even as a composite of both.² Marriage is reckoned to be an alliance between two separate groups, the pavula of the bride and the pavula of the bridegroom but at the same time nearly everyone is likely to be closely related to both sides.³ This is rather difficult to construe with a theory of affinal alliance between two discrete kin groups. These problems would appear to arise out of the fact that the Sinhalese have no unilineal descent groups⁴ and hence unrestricted cognatic descent cannot form the basis of discrete social groups, corporate, with an on-going collective identity and possessing common objectives such as marriage strategies.⁵

Since kinship among the Sewa Mende may for the moment be described as cognatic we shall require, if we are to avoid such difficulties as raised by Leach's analysis of Pul Eliya kinship and marriage, a set of analytical tools other than those of descent and alliance to enable us to handle the data without violation.

While the study of unilineal descent systems has been notably prominent a few scholars have pursued the problems relating to the analysis of cognatic systems, in particular the dialogue between Goodenough and

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1. ibid., P.105.
 2. ibid., P.112.
 3. ibid., P.112.
 4. ibid., PP. 10-11.
 5. J. Freeman, 'On the Concept of the Kindred', Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, Vol. 91, 1961, P.202.

Davenport is notable. Goodenough's analysis of Truk revealed that factors other than linearity existed as modalities in the formation of corporate kin groups.¹ The general implications were subsequently abstracted by Davenport² and Goodenough again.³ Two significant analytical distinctions emerged.

First of all within the context of consanguinity a distinction was made between ancestor focussed groups and ego focussed groups. The former comprise all the descendants through males and females of a single ancestor and the latter all the cognates of a given ego, often termed a kindred. The former may be referred to as a cognatic descent group. Radcliffe-Brown also drew attention to this distinction in his discussion of Teutonic kinship when he noted the difference between the 'sib' as a kindred around some ego and the 'stock' as the descendants of an ancestor.⁴ But far more important is the second analytical dichotomy, restricted and unrestricted descent, which Radcliffe-Brown failed to appreciate and therefore concluded that "it is only a unilineal system that will permit the division of society into separate organized kin groups."⁵ The significance of the distinction between restricted and unrestricted descent

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1. W. Goodenough, 'A problem in Malayo-Polynesian social organization, American Anthropologist, Vol.57, 1955.
 2. W. Davenport, 'Non-unilineal descent and descent groups', American Anthropologist, Vol 61, 1959.
 3. W. Goodenough, Review of 'Social Structure in South East Asia', (ed.) G. P. Murdock, American Anthropologist, Vol. 63, 1961.
 4. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, Introduction in African Systems of Kinship and Marriage (eds.) A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and D. Forde, Oxford, 1950, P.16.
 5. Ibid., P.82.

lies in the fact that it allows us to reject the usual opposition between unilineal descent and cognatic descent and to consider unilineal descent as merely one type of restricted descent, in this case based on the factor of sex. But there are other factors that may be called upon to restrict descent group membership. Firth has isolated at least seven.¹ Among the Sewa Mende it will be seen that corporate groups are established through restricted descent where the modal factor is residence. That is, the question of inclusion or exclusion is not based on a consideration of the mutually exclusive categories of male/female but on what might be called here/there. At a formal level both elementary systems are similar. However in their respective modalities there is some difference since the here/there or residence factor allows for a degree of choice for the actors as Davenport pointed out.² This concern with locality among the Sewa Mende is appropriate in the context of the contention that the kinship system is among other things a definition of the property system,³ which in this case revolves around land.

Biebuyck in his introduction to the International African Institutes' symposium on African agrarian systems⁴ points out that "Les systèmes fonciers, les droits et prétentions, privilèges et obligations qui greves la terre et sa produit, offrent a l'analyse un sujet fascinant

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1. R. Firth, 'Bilateral Descent Groups', in Studies in Kinship and Marriage, (ed.) I. Schapera, Royal Anthropological Institute Occasional Paper No. 16, 1963.
 2. Davenport, op. cit., P.561.
 3. cf. "Kinship relations are also and importantly property relations." P. Gulliver, op. cit., P.4.
 4. D. Biebuyck, African Agrarian Systems, Oxford, 1963.

mais difficile puis qu'il touches aux réalités économiques et sociales, politiques et religieuses les plus diverse."¹ The converse is equally true. Thus through the analysis of Sewa Mende structure and organization one ends considering features of land tenure. We shall argue that among the Sewa Mende systems of land tenure are not an empirically discernable social field but an integral content of other aspects of Sewa Mende sociology. It is, as it were, the other side of the coin and not a separate currency. This position was not arrived at a priori but during the course of the research, especially into Sewa Mende kinship.

"It is as important to know the conditions under which a field study was carried out as it is to know the conditions of an experiment."² It is to a discussion of these conditions that we must now turn before concluding this introductory chapter.

In the first place it is important to know that this study formed part of a series of investigations simultaneously underway or projected under the auspices of the School of Development Studies, Njala University College, Sierra Leone. The general aims of the initial studies were to produce information on socio-economic factors relating to agricultural development in Sierra Leone.³ Such material would be useful in itself for teaching purposes as well as administrative and policy making purposes, while at the same time key problems would be

1. Biebuyk, op. cit., P.2.

2. D. Maybury-Lewis, Akwe-Shavante Society, Oxford, 1967, P.XIX.

3. J. Pilgrim, Proposals for a Research Project on Economic Factors in the Development of Peasant Rice Farming. Submitted to the Director of the Institute of Economic Development and Planning, Dakar, cyclostyled, Njala, October, 1967.

highlighted and would therefore form the basis of further more specialised research. Despite the common foundation and aims of these studies they were in themselves planned as integral and distinct projects. Thus simultaneously with my own fieldwork in Southern Province Dr. D. Gamble was working in Port Lokko District and Mr. J. Pollock in Bombali District. Each of these areas is characterised by agricultural development of one sort or another. In Bombali District and Southern Province this took the form of mechanical cultivation schemes and Port Lokko District the intensive cultivation of swamp rice on cleared mangrove swamp. These considerations largely account for the location of my fieldwork in Sierra Leone.

As a Junior Research Fellow of the School of Development Studies I was fortunate in not having any specific problem or terms of reference charged to me for investigation. Indeed it was not even possible to formulate any substantial hypothesis since very little, in any sort of coherent form was known about the sociological implications of these various developments. As was mentioned, the task of these studies was largely to fulfil this initial requirement. This context of the research had two important consequences. Firstly, although I was in the field in the dual role of academic postgraduate at the University of Edinburgh and Research Fellow of Njala University College, this did not result in my prosecuting two lines of research. The requirements of both were, I hope adequately met in a unitary piece of work. However, the need for a general investigation did impart to my fieldwork, to a certain extent, a holistic and descriptive approach rather than a specific and problem orientated one from which the research never fully

escaped despite the concentration of work towards the end of my tour.

I arrived in Sierra Leone on the 8th November, 1966, but prior to that I carried out somewhat limited preparatory work. It is customary for fieldworkers to spend at least nine months or so in preparation. This unfortunately I was unable to do and spent only four months so occupied. Whatever the shortcomings, any further time allotted to preparation, would, on the whole, have been pointless since my initial premise, that I would be working among the Sherbro people, was proved false only on my arrival in the field.

The fact that I was to become involved in an area characterised by mechanical cultivation limited my choice of field location to only a few chiefdoms. Furthermore factors relating to communications and sources of supplies etc., had to be considered. There were then three possibilities, the towns of Bonthe, Pujehi and Torma Bum. Torma Bum had the advantage of being a road terminal which would facilitate travel out but on the other hand the river Sewa is navigable only during the rainy season for anything larger than a small dinghy. Similar considerations also ruled out Pujehi plus the fact that only a small proportion of the mechanically cultivated acreage is in Pujehi District. Bonthe then seemed the appropriate base in the field from which to collect cash, supplies and mail. This settled, the final choice of chiefdom was further restricted to three possible chiefdoms, Bendu Cha, Nongoba Bullom and Kwamebai Krim. Prior discussions with various persons at Njala had already suggested the suitability of Nongoba Bullom chiefdom in terms of the temperament and personality of the Paramount Chief. My conversations

with the District Officer at Bonthe confirmed this and he also commented on the inadvisability of taking up residence in a village other than the Paramount Chief's capital, at least initially. Such factors were also in accord with the fact that Bendu Cha had relatively few mechanically cultivated sites while Kwamebai Krim is about twelve hours by launch from Bonthe, a considerable distance in an emergency. Hence I set out from Bonthe up the Sewa river for Gbap on the 12th of December where I set up my household. I sailed down the Sewa for the last time eighteen months later at the beginning of June 1968, leaving Sierra Leone for the United Kingdom at the end of the same month.

Of course this time was not all spent in Gbap or even Nongoba Bullom chiefdom. At the end of each month I travelled to Bonthe to collect my salary, mail and supplies for the next month. Occasionally if enough cash was on hand then stores for a two month period could be taken up river. But on the whole the monthly trips to Bonthe were a welcome break. About once every three months I would proceed on from Bonthe to Njala rather than returning to Gbap. These treks to Njala were not only useful breaks in themselves but also afforded an opportunity to discuss the progress of field research. In most cases however the trek to Njala was precipitated by some specific contingency such as a need for fuel or stationery or both. The time spent in the field proper was then considerable. I like to think this is largely due to my enthusiasm but it should be pointed out that I had no house of my own other than that in Gbap and hence any sojourn away from Gbap was possible only through the hospitality of friends and colleagues, and clearly they could not therefore be of any great length.

The research in the field can be divided into two periods. From December 1966 until June the following year I concentrated on learning the Mende language and acquiring a general and overall impression of the way of life of the Sewa Mende. It was towards the end of this period that the principal fields of sociological interest emerged. This initial period was not uniform but characterised by a series of transitions which are best described by the various sobriquets I moved under. In the beginning I was "ye pumoi na" (that white man), "massa", then "kene Chasi" (Mr. Charles) and finally "nya nde" (my brother) or "nya mble" (my brother-in-law). While my assimilation into the village was gradual it gathered considerable momentum when, after two months, I moved out of the Rest House which was situated some several hundred yards from the village into my own mud house in the village. At the same time the Paramount Chief formally, at a village meeting introduced me to the community. At this time my command of Mende was negligible and I had to make my speech through an interpreter. Though a speech in Mende would have been better the people are accustomed to this procedure and indeed their own Paramount Chiefs traditionally address them in this manner through the Lavallie, that is Speaker. The Paramount Chief in his turn explained with a shrewd grasp of my work, that while, unlike other white men, I may live and work and eat with them I was not to be considered an eccentric and hence treated without seriousness. Furthermore, he pointed out, they must not expect any immediate benefit from my work, that will only come some time after I had left. Nevertheless they should at all times assist me and answer my queries honestly. The transformation in my relations with the villagers was quite remarkable.

After some few weeks I had identified the main personalities in the village and attempted to share my time with them all in order to avoid friction that might later have made the prosecution of research difficult. Initially of course my ability to engage in social intercourse was severely handicapped by my inability to converse in Mende. But as this improved I was able to spend several fruitful hours during the day in the company of various adultmen. Nevertheless it was impossible not to spend more time with those who for various reasons were either good companions or good informants or both. Thus I found myself with J.P. or Vandi or old Mama Kati when I suppose I should really have been with Karimu the village chief or Lamina or T.J. During this period I quickly learned the names of all the adult men and to identify their wives but the ubiquitous children baffled me throughout my sojourn.

Of considerable help while learning the language as a teacher was my research assistant. He was selected and appointed by Njala University College and arrived in Gbap at the beginning of January. Max Hanson was well educated, having acquired a certificate in agriculture from Njala University College and quite at home in the chiefdom where he had numerous kinsmen including the Tuckers of Gbap to whom he is affinally related. I waited in some anxiety for the arrival of my promised assistant since he could be crucial as regards the effectiveness of the field research. However he proved to be a sympathetic and enthusiastic worker who tackled the problem of soliciting information from his countrymen with courtesy and perseverance. I recall that on many occasions it was I who first weakened in the face of an intractable respondent and Max who insisted that with a bit more cunning and application we could get the information. In short I could not have wished for a better field research assistant.

I refer to him as assistant and not interpreter though, of course initially he was more interpreter than assistant. But during the last months of fieldwork he was almost wholly assistant. It was not only my policy that I should dispense with the use of an interpreter but also Max Hanson's, who wished to avoid this role. However at no time was my command of the language sufficient to enable me to follow satisfactorily the more technical and idiomatic conversations on specific topics concerned with for example agriculture or jural matters. Thus for the most part we worked together on routine tasks such as surveys and genealogies. However it was often possible to split the work and cover twice the amount in the same time. But on the whole this method was employed only as an expedient since often some incidental feature might crop up, the significance of which only I could appreciate and hence follow up. Thus when conducting more or less formal scheduled enquiries, my assistant would pursue the schedule with the informant, which would take the form of a dialogue in Mende while I unobtrusively noted down the information, interrupting only to follow up certain relevant points.

Though on such occasions notebook and pencil were in evidence in other fields I quickly realised that they killed any promising response. Thus for example when the conversation turned from the mundane talk of farmers discussing the state of the crops etc., to matters concerning ancestors or kinship or witchcraft, the appearance of a notebook was met with passive hostility. Hence I often had to rely on my memory until I returned to my house and this was not always immediately possible since a sudden departure would have been regarded as equally suspicious. In such situations it was useful to have my assistant since I could easily tell him in English that this conversation was important and that details

were to be remembered as far as possible. Later we could put our heads together as it were during the writing up of the particular episode.

But it was not of course possible to have the assistant around continually and anyway I tried to organize his work according to an eight hour day despite the fact that field research requires virtually a twenty four hour day. Nevertheless in order to exploit his continued presence in the community I furnished him with a notebook and instructed him to make entries in the usual ethnographic fashion. This however proved too ambitious and hence unsuccessful and therefore I limited him to recording information on a few specific topics, not just as they cropped up in daily life but also as a result of queries initiated by himself. In writing up these items he was encouraged to use Mende and as little English as possible. This was quite practicable since we had already developed our own peculiar language comprising a mixture of English and Mende. This work produced useful results which supplemented my own notes and such items that we pursued jointly.

Thus when fieldwork was in full swing, that is after the initial six months or so, an average day would be made up as follows. After breakfast my assistant and I would write up the previous evening's work. This might involve working over a questionnaire schedule, comparing and writing up notes on a specific event such as a dispute or further information on some Mende concepts and so on. If certain points emerged that required clarification and could be dealt with immediately the appropriate person would be sought out and the information acquired to fill in the gap. Having done this I would then explain the work to be

done in the evening which would then be discussed. This would take us up to lunch. What happened in the afternoon depended on circumstances but usually we went to the farms, where during the dry season the villagers were to be found. The evening's work would begin by visiting those respondents yet to be interviewed and arranging an evening in the next few days to carry it out, and proceed by interviewing those one or two respondents with whom arrangements had been previously made. The pilot surveys and trial runs had quickly shown the need to make appointments for an interview as opposed to just arriving unheralded and setting to.

These paragraphs convey, perhaps, the flavour of the less systematic aspects of the fieldwork, what might be called 'participant listening'. By 'participant observation', a term with a more active connotation, one might then refer to the process of collecting facts and figures.

With the principal fields of interest isolated by June 1967 a series of systematic schedules were formulated in order to elicit some basic statistical data. They may be labelled as follows:

1. Rice Huller Use
2. Work Study
3. Genealogical Study (Gbap)
4. Household Composition Survey (Gbap)
5. Harvesting Household Study (Gbap)
6. Harvesting Household Study (Batahol)
7. Mojiba Study.

Data on the use of the rice huller in Gbap was gathered with the help of a local literate. Since I could not afford to employ him continually it was decided that he should work on a day-on day-off basis throughout the year, a procedure which it was reckoned would furnish material on the

activity of the rice huller quite satisfactorily. However it proved impracticable since his day's wages largely went on gin and he quickly lost track of whether a particular day was one to be worked or not. Hence I changed the routine to one week on and one week off, less satisfactory methodologically but it at least produced reliable data. Furnished with a notebook and pencil his task was simply to note each customer's name, home village, and the amount of raw husk rice brought for hulling. This work began in April but stopped in June when hulling petered out. It should have begun again in January but due to a series of mechanical failures hulling was rather spasmodic. Data collection ceased altogether in April 1968.

The Work Study was undertaken after discussions at Njala University College. The study began in April 1967. The aim of the study was simply to furnish hard data on what people do and how much time they spend doing it. This was tackled at two levels simultaneously, the individual and the household. Six households in Gbap were selected on the basis of varying stages in the developmental cycle, varying agricultural interests and, not least, willingness to co-operate. The procedure was as follows. Each household was visited once every two weeks. Each member of the household present on that particular day was identified, including infants. The observer then noted for each individual the time when he or she began some activity, when it ceased and a new one initiated. A description of the task was noted beside the appropriate times. In effect the material does not record the timing of an individual's actions from waking till retiring in the evening but from the time the household left the village for the farm and returned in the evening.

It will be apparent that this study consumed a considerable amount of time, one week in every two in fact. Hence, as was intended, it quickly devolved upon my assistant who applied himself to it for a complete agricultural year, that is until the end of March 1968. This at first appears to be a large outlay of time and resources for rather minimal returns. However, over and above an accurate record of the labour input of various individuals and households, it was uncommon if in any day some other event of sociological interest, or an illuminating discussion did not occur during the study of any particular household. Nevertheless the Study did become something of a millstone since most other programmes had to be accommodated around the Work Study as I was loather to abandon the latter until I had data for a complete agricultural year.

By June 1967 a pilot survey of the Gbap households had been conducted aimed at locating and identifying each household head. This survey revealed 62 independant domestic groups in Gbap. Not all of these were farming households in the strict sense of the term.

Dispenser	1
Dispensary Porter	1
Teacher	1
Paramount Chief	1
Speaker	1
Chieftdom N.A. Secretary	1
N.A. Court Clerks	2
Chieftdom Police	5
Secretary of Co-operative	1
Ferryman	1
Traders	3
TOTAL	<u>18</u> domestic groups.

These eighteen households were not considered for detailed study since their movements and livelihood are constrained by extraneous and particular circumstances. This does not mean to say that they are sociologically irrelevant in the village organization of Gban.

It was also apparent by this time that unilineal descent groups did not figure in the kinship pattern of the village and that for any individual the significant kin category was his personal kindred (ndehubla). Thus it was not possible to sit down with a few key figures and establish the kinship structure of Gbap. The only solution was to tackle each household head individually and work through his kinsmen and affines systematically.

This data was not only necessary to provide material on the kinship pattern prevailing in Gbap but also to furnish material on the incidence of conjugal separation, types of marriage, patterns of residence, polygyny and so on. Usually the schedule could be completed for any individual in one evening but occasionally it could take up to three evenings. This work had to be done in the evenings and not during the day. Having by this time been accepted into the community and therefore lost my 'stranger value' it would have been considered an unwarranted imposition if I had attempted to carry it out during the day when my respondents were otherwise occupied. Furthermore, they did not reckon themselves obliged to fulfil any arrangement if some other matter required their immediate attention. Hence the Study dragged on for some time and was not, in fact, completed until February 1968.

These interviews had to be carried out somewhat formally and with notebook and pen in evidence. In most cases there was an initial reluctance to co-operate. This arose through the fact that, for the purposes of the schedule, we required to know the name of each individual kinsman. This required considerable explanation. Two informants refused outright despite friendliness and co-operation in other spheres. Another

two rendered so much patently false information as to make the result useless. In such instances material had to be gathered piecemeal and through the returns of their kinsmen and affines living in Gbap. Notably absent from This Study was the Paramount Chief himself. It was, however, apparent that he would have considered it a severe affront if I had attempted to include him and might therefore have jeopardised my situation. However an accurate but not wholly complete picture was built up through data furnished by his paternal half brothers and other kinsmen. But in any case the unique position of the Paramount Chief would not have allowed the inclusion of such material in the general computations.

During the harvesting season data was collected on thirty Gbap households and the same number of Batahol households. Since this material is of some importance in the thesis some comment is perhaps necessary on this figure of thirty. Clearly for statistical purposes a larger sample would have been more satisfactory. This number arose in the first place through a consideration of the time it would take to conduct the study, especially on Batahol site. Since during the harvesting season the situation is changing continually, it was necessary for comparative purposes to acquire data on household composition at a single point in time. Without a team of interviewers this was not possible. Furthermore since the Work Study was still under way this effectively left only eight consecutive days in which both my research assistant and I could prosecute the survey. Finally of the forty-four households studied in detail in Gbap, ten of these were normally resident elsewhere from June to December, that is during the agricultural off-season. From the remainder the round figure of thirty was chosen.

Each household was visited on its farm and all those persons present identified by name and exact relationship to the household head. Temporary members (pomabla, help-people) were identified. The same procedure was carried out on Batahol site but with a more lengthy schedule aimed at eliciting the kinship organization of the farm villages and certain genealogical data considered relevant which was already known for the Gbap households. This survey was implemented twice, once during the first half of the harvesting season and again during the latter half when, as was suspected, the households had reached their maximum size. In Chapter V the data relate to the latter half of the harvesting season.

The Batahol households were not selected at random. In the first place there was no reliable information upon which to base a random sample and secondly in view of the short duration of the harvesting season, time did not allow for a pilot survey. Thus it was decided to start with the first household down-river, that is nearest Gbap, on Batahol site and work up the site dealing with each household in turn. Batahol site itself was selected on grounds of expediency, it was quite simply the nearest and most accessible. But even then the furthest households were about three hours journey return from Gbap by my launch.

By April these studies were complete and so on the first of May I moved out of Gbap to take up residence in the upland village of Mojába where I planned to carry out a community study for comparison with Gbap. Thus, as in Gbap, a household survey was implemented but unlike Gbap I could not directly observe changes in the agricultural cycle, and had to rely on verbal information from the household heads and others.

Secondly, I knew from a number of previous visits to Mojiba and other upland villages that there were localised cognatic descent groups and that therefore adequate genealogical data for the analysis of the village could be provided by a few key persons. I felt furthermore that I already had enough genealogical material for other purposes.

I planned to spend one month in Mojiba but in fact by dint of sustained effort had acquired enough material after some twenty days. This is a remarkably short time and ~~deserves~~ some comment. First of all it should be pointed out that I was no stranger to the village having, as was mentioned, visited it on several other occasions and once for three consecutive days during a sacrifice to the village ancestors. (During my later and longer sojourn in Mojiba another ceremony (tokpoi goile, giving to the palm tree) was also carried out by the village. Such events greatly contributed to my speedy appreciation of the village organization and structure.) Secondly my command of the language was at its best while my assistant and I knew precisely what information we needed and how to acquire it through prior planning and experience. Conversely the villagers did not see us as strangers and appreciated the level of knowledge and interest I had of Mende affairs. I could of course have stayed in Mojiba but decided to return to Gbap to clear up some loose ends which I had previously considered lost.

Although Mojiba is in no way considered typical it is offered as an actual upland community. Despite the difficulties of communications I made a number of treks by launch and on foot which took me to most parts of the area. My impressions are that Mojiba, Gbap and the households on

Batahol site are not unique except at the most empirical level. To have moved into villages selected at random from the map would, it seems to me, have proved so difficult as regards extracting data as to have outweighed any methodological advantages.

Clearly then by absolute standards of methodology this study suffers from some serious faults. The statistical material in particular is crude and elementary. It is offered in the belief that it is still better, no matter how marginally, than vague statements of the type involving such qualifiers as 'usually', 'very often', 'uncommon' and so on. My defence is based on the usual but real difficulties facing anthropologists working in an alien and illiterate culture.

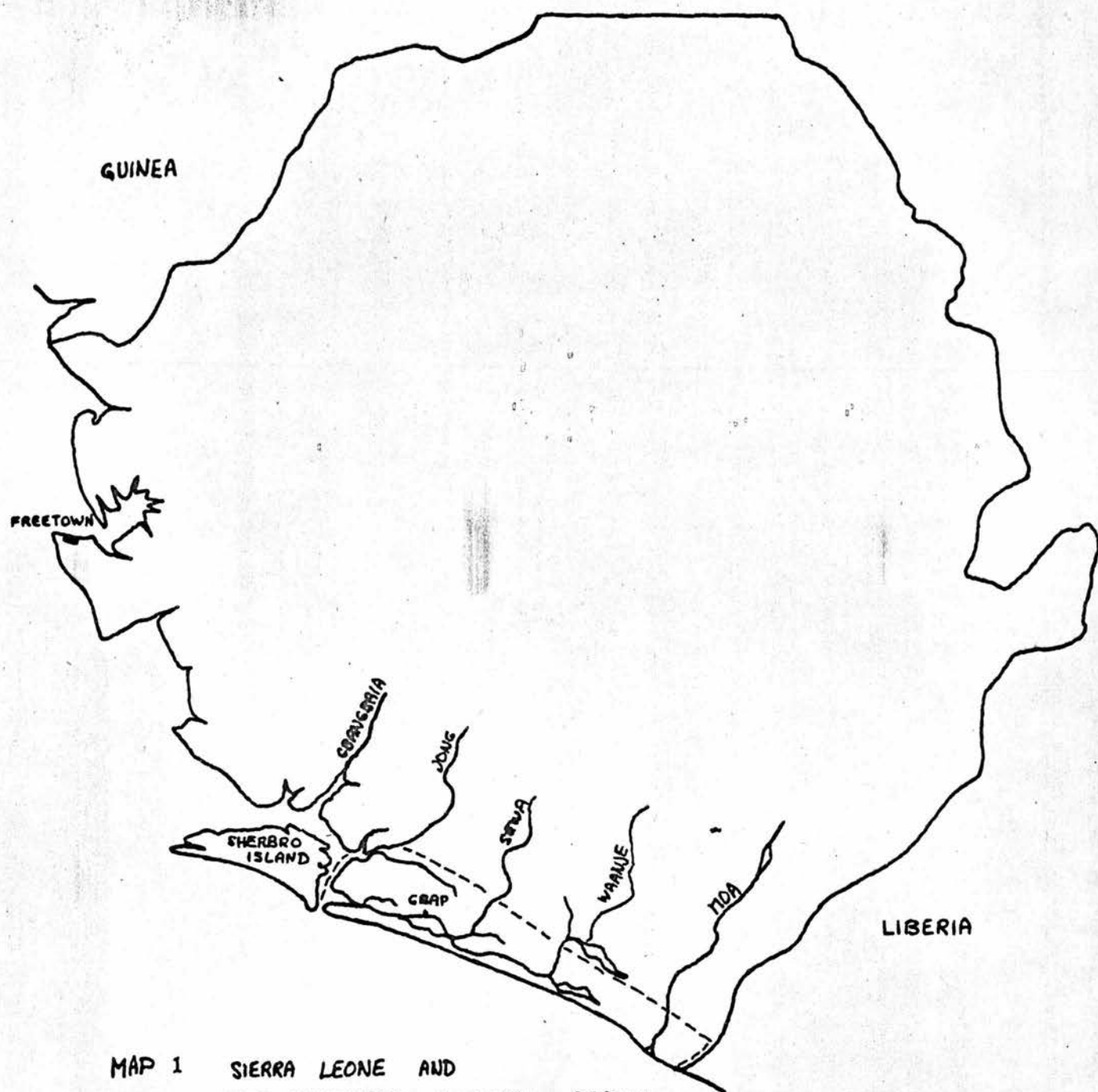
The layout of the dissertation reflects the principal thesis. After Chapter II which provides some background information, Chapters III and IV describe and analyse the ecological and structural parameters within which empirical behaviour comes to some sort of 'working arrangement'. In Chapters V, VI and VII this aspect, that is the social organization, is tackled in detail. Chapter V in particular is concerned with the dynamics of domestic group organization and while the analysis makes it possible to relate certain characteristics to the ecology and social structure a consideration of further aspects of the social system, specifically questions relating to corporate group organization and land tenure, are found to be necessary. These are discussed in Chapters VI and VII. Finally in Chapter VIII some general conclusions are drawn up.

CHAPTER II

THE GENERAL BACKGROUND

The research is concerned with the social organization of the people inhabiting an area approximately between longitudes $15^{\circ} 30' W$ and $15^{\circ} 45' W$ and latitudes $7^{\circ} 30' N$ and $7^{\circ} 15' N$ in Sierra Leone. Geographically the area has certain claims to being described as a natural region. The most significant factor in this respect is the river system of the lower Sewa and Waanje which provides communication parallel to the coast and within the region but only limited exits to the hinterland. While all such demarcating lines are essentially abstract, a line joining the heads of navigation would merit some attention as the boundary of the region. Rainfall incidence, vegetation, topography and demography also serve to distinguish the area from the rest of Sierra Leone. In one respect however, the region shows a marked lack of homogeneity. The soils and geology within the region vary, such that the northern half is characterised by the usual red earth lateritic soil while the southern half is made up of sand of recent marine origin. For quite extensive areas this sand is overlain with deep deposits of alluvial soils as a result of the annual flooding of the Sewa and Waanje rivers. This feature has given rise to differing patterns of land use within the region, a key element in this study.

Five of the eight large rivers that comprise the principal elements in the drainage system of Sierra Leone have their estuaries in

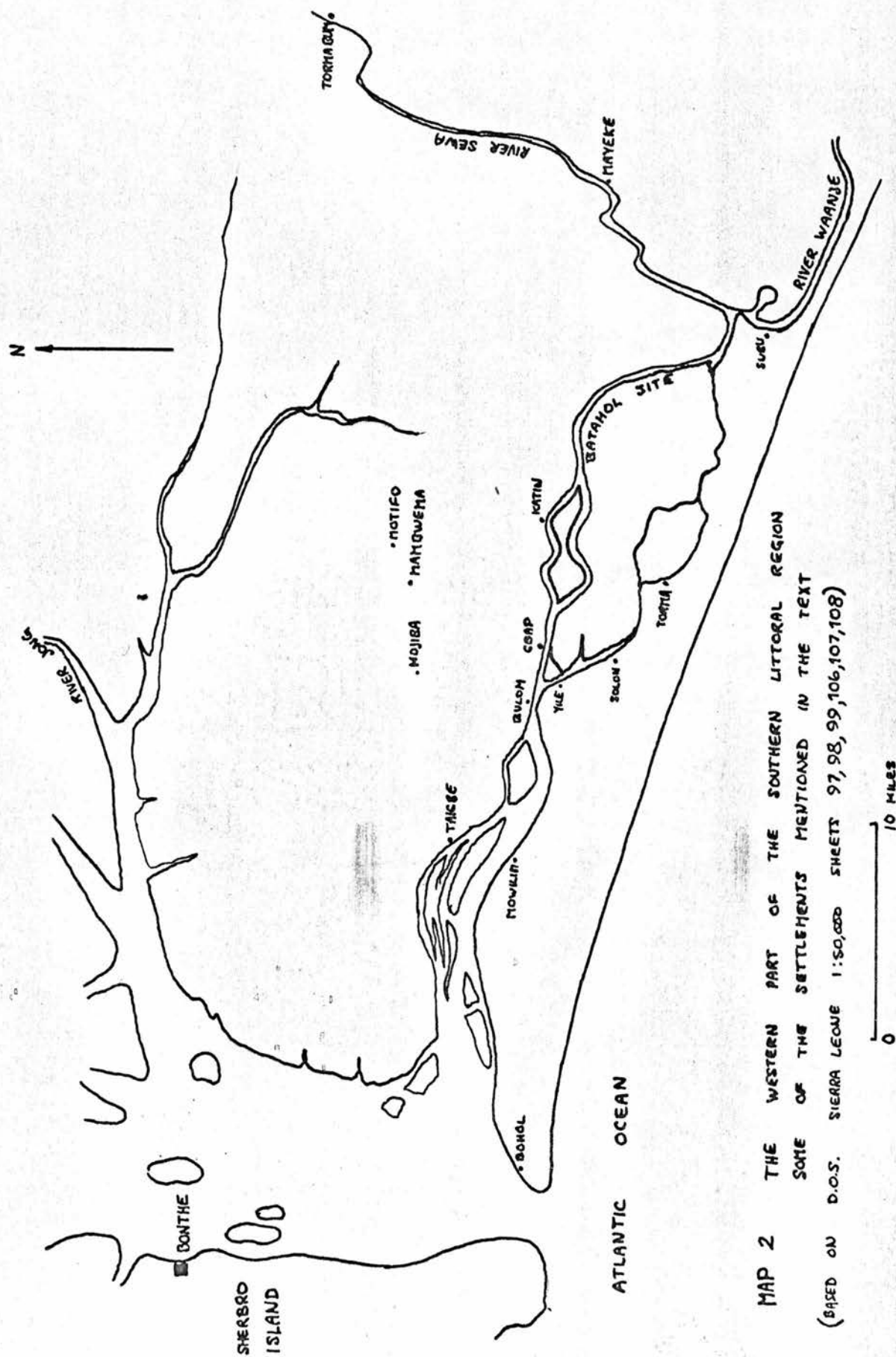


MAP 1 SIERRA LEONE AND
THE SOUTHERN LITTORAL REGION

0 50 MILES

the administrative Districts, Bonthe and Pujeh, which include and indeed largely comprise the region under consideration, which may be referred to as the Southern Littoral Region. In the east the Gbangbaia and Jong, and in the West the Moa, flow more or less directly into the sea and are peripheral to the region. The Sewa and Waanje, however, flow to within several hundred yards of the sea where a great sand bar (Turner's Peninsula) diverts their respective courses eastwards and parallel to the coast for some fifty miles. This interruption coupled with the low flat interior has resulted in a flood plain complicated by many creeks and lakes.

From a human point of view the river system is a valuable means of communication in the region and, indeed, the only one other than footpaths. Launches of up to nine or ten tons burthen navigate the rivers up to the small towns of Mattru, Torma Bum and Gbundapi, although Torma Bum can only be reached during the wet season when there is then enough water under the keel. All the larger boats are owned by the government, co-operative societies and traders from Bonthe, though there are also a number of smaller launches run by owner-skipper. Like the lorries of the interior they carry both passengers and freight although the larger vessels tend to specialise in carrying produce, mainly rice and piassava, and are then particularly numerous on the rivers from May through till September. During the rest of the year they ply between the Turtle Islands, Bonthe and Mattru carrying fish and fish traders for the markets of the interior. The smaller boats, on the other hand, tend to specialise on a particular route and attempt to abide by a regular schedule deriving their income largely from passengers and mixed freight. Thus at least one boat, sometimes none at all, would make the four day journey from



MAP 2 THE WESTERN PART OF THE SOUTHERN LITTORAL REGION
 SOME OF THE SETTLEMENTS MENTIONED IN THE TEXT
 (BASED ON D.O.S. SIERRA LEONE 1:50,000 SHEETS 97,98,99,106,107,108)

Bonthe to Gbundapi and back once a week. The fare from Gbap to Bonthe, approximately thirty miles is five shillings while freight is reckoned intuitively, leaving room for bargaining, but a full fortygallon drum for the same distance is usually ten shillings. By far the most lucrative route is that from Bonthe to Mattru which is more or less monopolised by a Sierra Leone businessman and Member of Parliament. The Government launches at one time provided a more organized service on the river but in 1967-68 only four boats were operating out of a fleet that counted fourteen at one time. Thus there is a postal agent at Gbap where mail is scheduled for despatch and delivery once a week but during my stay this only occurred about twice. Only the Government launches and those of the M.P. are British built. Interestingly enough, three of the latter's four vessels are ex-Government boats. The rest of the boats on the rivers are built on the creeks by local shipwrights using indigenous materials. There are also a number of ancillary craftsmen, fitters who install and maintain the engines. Needless to say, the quality of the materials used in local construction is not as good as that in the imported vessels and hence the rate of depreciation is quite high: one engine may power three or four new hulls before it too expires.

The seasonal variations that are reflected in the nature of the river traffic at different times of the year are the direct result of the climatic regime of the region, in particular the incidence of rainfall. Fig. 1 shows the average rainfall per month at Bonthe. The graph illustrates clearly how the year is divided into two seasons: a wet season extending roughly from May till November when the bulk of the annual 158 inches of rain per annum falls and a relatively dry season from December till April.

Month	Number of inches of rain
January	0.14
February	0.17
March	1.44
April	4.57
May	10.1
June	19.69
July	38.65
August	33.69
September	24.81
October	15.73
November	7.07
December	2.73
<hr/>	
Total per annum	158.85

Fig. 1 Average rainfall per month, Bonthe.
 (source: Waldock, et. al., op. cit., P.119)

Though it has obvious effects as regards river transport the rainfall regime is far more significant in its ordering of the agricultural year. The dry season is characterised by heightened agricultural activity when farms are prepared and crops harvested while the wet season is a notable 'off-season' as far as farm work is concerned. Equally important though more indirect is the extensive annual flooding of the rivers of the region which has already been alluded to above, a feature which must be considered in the context of the soils and geology of the area.

The basic rocks of the northern half of the region are part of an ancient platform of schists and gneiss, the oldest rocks in Sierra Leone. They are overlain by various clays and gravels and soils derived from the basic rocks which are the results of prolonged weathering. They are characterised by lateritic gravel and pan and are of relatively low fertility. The recent coastal accumulation of the southern half terminates sharply against the northern formation. There is a characteristic change in colour from greyish sand to red earth, the latter forming a low shallow cliff ten to fifteen feet high. This line runs almost parallel to the coast about six miles inland.

The soils of the sandy sub-region are practically pure sand though the older deposits furthest from the coast contain a proportion of finer material and are hence slightly more fertile. These soils are very deep, but not as free draining as might be expected due to the formation of a hard ferruginous layer about three feet from the surface. In their Report, Waldo et al., suggest that this is due to over-

cultivation.¹ Professor G. Worrall, one time Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture at Njala University College, is, however, as a result of his researches, of the opinion that the formation is natural.²

The alluvial flats deposited on the sand are the results of the annual flooding and deposition of great quantities of silt eroded from the interior and carried by the Sewa and Waanje rivers. These soils are inherently fertile and the surface alluvium is renewed each year. With the introduction of new cultivating techniques it has been possible to take 1800 lbs of raw husk rice per acre per annum without fertilisers. This figure should be compared with 400 lbs per acre from dry rice cultivation on the upland in order to appreciate the significance of 'fertile' and 'infertile'. In fact even this comparison is misleading since the upland system requires a fallowing of around six years while the same acre is cropped annually on the alluvial flats. Taking this factor into account the figure for upland yields would be amended to about 70 lbs per acre per annum.

The sandy region is very low, a matter of a few feet above sea level, but it is not flat. Topographical variations give rise to vegetational differences over and above those associated with the dominant soil type. The banks of the Sewa and Waanje are relatively higher than the surrounding land; the characteristic levee formation of rivers in their flood plain. The alluvial flats slope down and away from the banks

1. Waldock, E.A., Capstick, E.S., and Browning, A.J., Soil Conservation and Land Use in Sierra Leone, Freetown, Government Printer, 1951, P.5.

2. Personal communication.

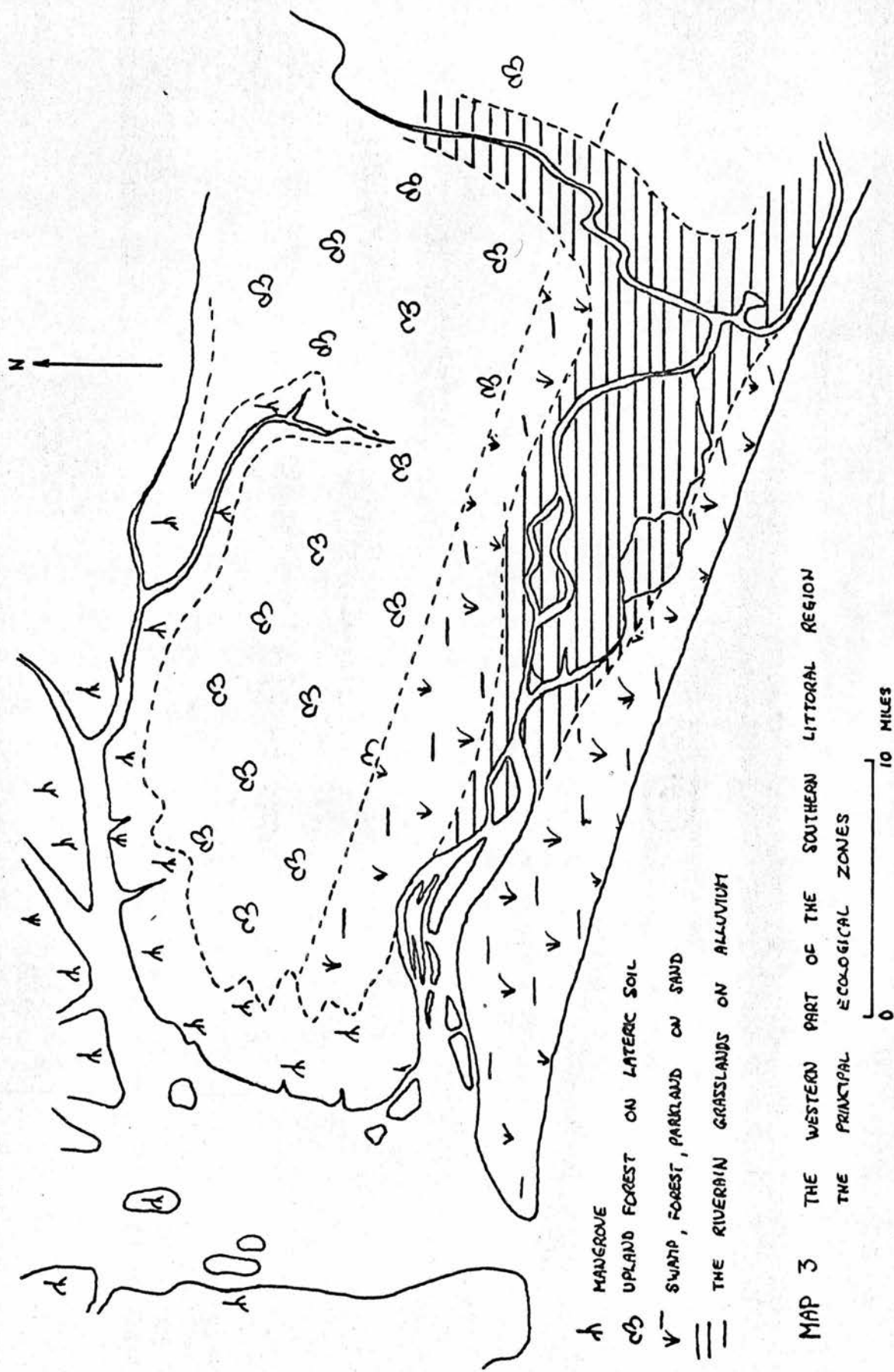
and where the underlying sand becomes exposed there are perennially wet swamps. Here tropical hydrophyllous flora such as anthostema senegalense, uapaca guineensis, raphia vinifera, soelria barteri, etc., are predominant. The natural vegetation of the alluvial flats by contrast comprises vast areas of pure stands of thick massive grass (rottboellia exaltata). Elsewhere the vegetation is either thick forest where the oil palm (elaeis guineensis), diospyros heudelotii, dichostachys spp., newbouldia ^elavis are notable among numerous species, or parkland where dispersed wild plum (parinari macrophylla) and oil palm grow among extensive swards of grass.

Where the sand meets the red earth upland there are again extensive swamps where raphia vinifera and r. gracilis are important. The upland is uniformly forested with a wide variety of species though again the oil palm is notable. Dispersed throughout the upland are small isolated swamps.

The region is then qualified by a degree of diversity. (Map 3) There are two basic sub-regions: the upland to the north and the southern sandy region. This latter area is further complicated by alluvial flats and swamps giving rise to a number of ecological zones. In the next chapter we shall be concerned with the examination in detail of how these zones are exploited. Meanwhile we shall continue with a brief discussion of some demographic features which will conclude the general background.

A census of Sierra Leone was carried out in 1963, the results of which were published in three volumes in 1965.¹ The scope and aims

1. The Sierra Leone Government 1963 Population Census of Sierra Leone, 3 Vols., Central Statistics Office, Freetown, 1965.



of the census were ambitious, not only attempting to enumerate the population but also attempting to acquire data on population density, sex and age ratios, literacy, ethnography, employment, household size and composition, migration and so on. As with any census carried out in a largely illiterate population it incorporates a degree of unreliability which more or less varies directly with the sophistication of the material presented.

The demographic dimension distinguishes the region from the rest of Sierra Leone as one characterised by a low density of population. If the region is defined as comprising the chiefdoms Bendu Cha, Nongoba Bullom, Kwamebai Krim, Panga Krim and Mano Sakrim then an average density of 43 persons per square mile can be computed. (Table 1) This figure should be compared with the national average of 78 persons per square mile.

Material relating to migration directly is not available in detail nor in the right form. The census has recorded data by chiefdoms relating to the number of inhabitants not born in the respective chiefdoms, that is, the number of immigrants. There is however no comparable data on emigration and this must be inferred from a consideration of the sex ratios, or excess of males over females. Thus while the sex ratios may allow Clarke to claim that Bonthe and Pujehu are among "the main reservoirs from which men migrate"¹ the figures on immigration would seem to qualify this to a certain extent. (Table 2) From this data it can be seen that

1. J. I. Clarke, Sierra Leone in Maps, London, 1966, P.45.

Chiefdom	Area (square miles)	No. persons	Density
Bendu Cha	40	3,232	36
Nongoba Bullom	210	10,071	48
Kwambai Krim	170	5,057	30
Panga Krim	20	2,076	104
Mano Sakrim	95	2,828	30
Total area		585	23,264
			Mean density 39

Table 1: Population and density.

Chiefdom	No. persons	No. persons born outside Bonthe-Pujehu Districts	
		Males	Females
Bendu Cha	3,232	233	160
Nongoba Bullom	10,071	840	832
Kwamebai Krim	5,057	227	228
Panga Krim	2,076	102	89
Mano Sakrim	2,828	159	240
		1,561	1,549
		3,110	

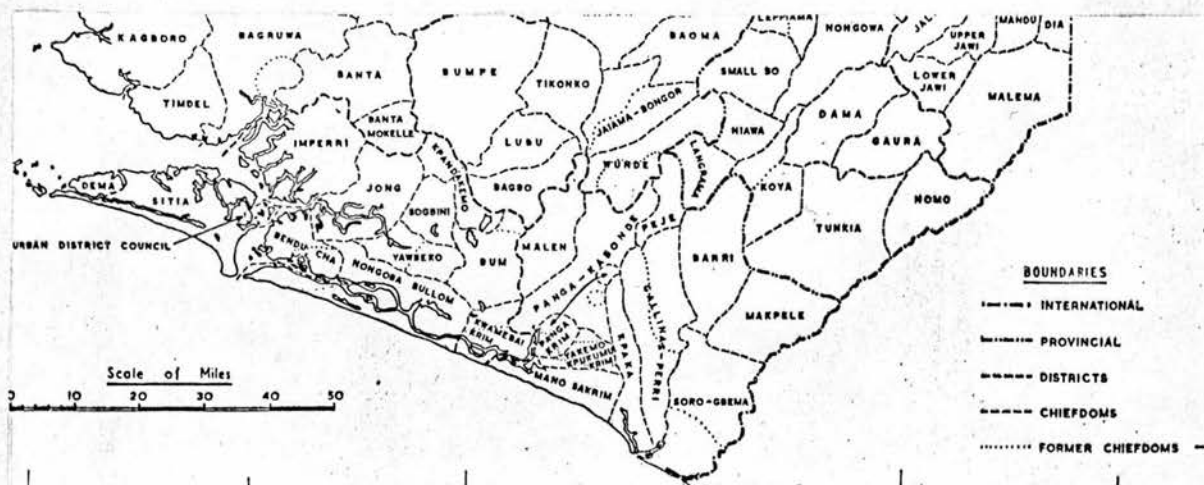
Percentage born outside Bonthe and Pujehu Districts - 13%

Table 2: Immigration.

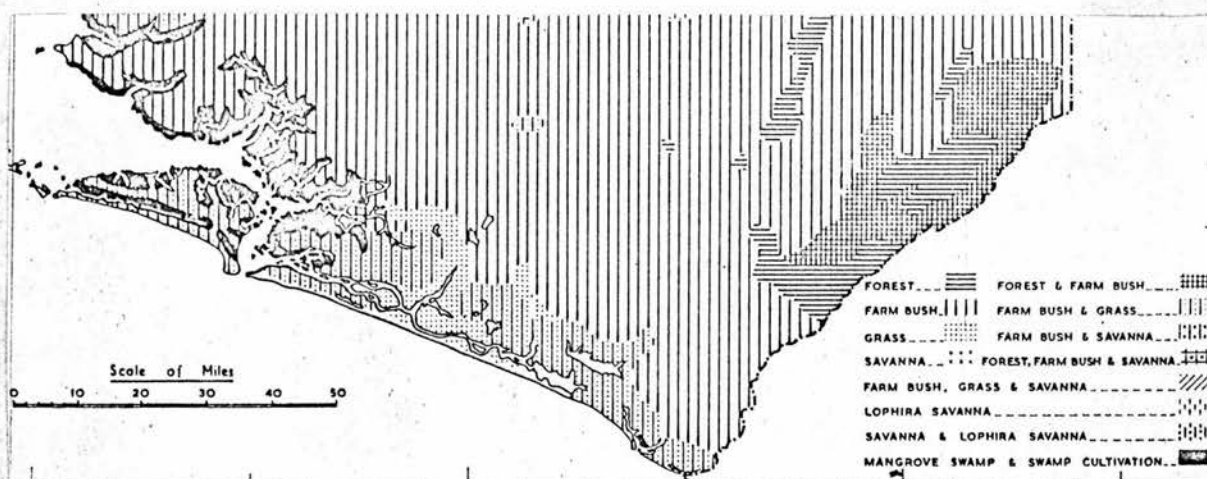
13% of the population of the Sewa Mende chiefdoms were born elsewhere. Furthermore these immigrants are made up of both men and women in almost equal numbers. It is suggested here that the factors behind such migration as the figures reveal are rather more complex than a simple movement from the country to the town and it would appear that in the region under consideration here, migration out of the area is matched by immigration. It has been necessary to deal with this issue since, as regards the general thesis and the presence of a large scale mechanical cultivation scheme, it might be argued that migration is a relevant factor. While movements within the area are highly significant, immigration into the region as a result of the cultivation scheme is negligible. Indeed one of the major problems facing the scheme is that of expanding its operations to an economic scale in a low density area and its inability to attract farmers from outside the region.

The distribution of rural settlement map (Map 6) reflects the foregoing discussion of demography. The region is again distinguished as a belt of relatively sparsely settled land about fifteen miles wide and parallel to the coast. Within the region the same configuration is repeated though it is not easily discernable since temporarily inhabited farm houses on the river banks have also been included by the cartographer. If these dwellings are ignored then it is possible to identify the two sub-regions wherein the southern half on sandy soil is rather more sparsely settled than the northern half.

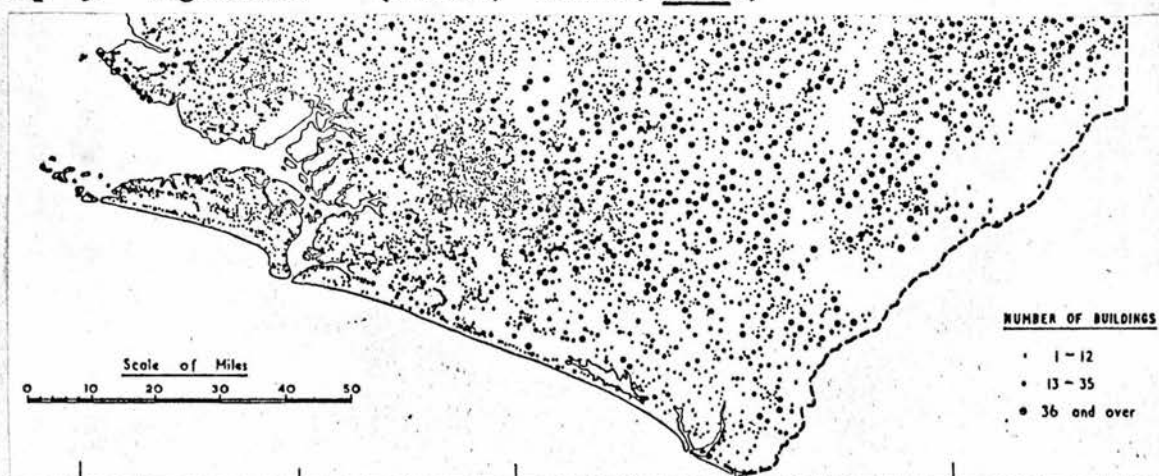
A further feature, though this is not discernable on the map is the difference in size of the settlements. In the southern half



Map 4 The Chiefdoms (source, Clarke, op. cit.)



Map 5 Vegetation (source, Clarke, ibid.)



Map 6 Distribution of rural settlement (source, Clarke, ibid.)

settlements are rather fewer in number than in the upland but are, on the other hand, usually much larger. There are, however, certain exceptions to this broad pattern. On the southern bank of the Sewa, and to a limited extent on the northern side, for about ten miles upstream there are a number of small settlements. Here it should be noted that the effects of seasonal flooding are minimal and this is especially so on the southern bank which is very high. Similarly there is a group of villages on the Waanje where the river runs parallel to, and about nine hundred yards from, the coast. This southern bank, like that at the estuary is made up of sand and not alluvial levee. Elsewhere settlement sites on the river that remain perennially dry are scarce and in fact are already built up by existing villages.

The dwellings themselves also reflect differing subregional characteristics, most obviously in their colouring. Those in the sandy southern region are grey as a result of using a mixture of sand and black alluvium in construction while those in the upland are bright red. Here it is also quite common to whitewash the upper half of the walls a feature rarely seen on the riverside dwellings.

There are two major house designs, round and square plan. Most of the square plan houses are to be found in the riverside villages but there are so many exceptions that such a generalization is doubtful. Thus Gbap, a riverside village, is almost wholly made up of square houses while Yile, another riverside village some two miles away features, in the main, houses of the round type. Similarly the incidence of corrugated iron roofing is often the style of certain villages and reflects the taste

of the leaders of the community. Sometimes rather facile conclusions are drawn from such easily discernable features, when in fact more restricted and particular contingencies are the cause. Thus the high incidence of square plan houses in Gbap is largely the result of the zealous activities of the Chiefdom Sanitary Officer who is resident in Gbap and who makes up for his inability to cover the whole chiefdom by intense efforts in his own village. Similarly the number of corrugated iron roofs in Gbap is the direct result of an edict of the late Paramount Chief who had his capital, then predominantly thatched, gutted by a severe fire. Furthermore it is worthwhile pointing out that in terms of initial cost and upkeep over three years a corrugated iron roof is in fact cheaper than one of thatch. The incidence of such roofing among riverside villages reflects a smaller size of producing-consuming unit or domestic group, a degree of involvement in a cash economy and access to such materials but has little to do with the relative wealth of the communities.

Finally to return to the question of ethnic boundaries raised in the previous chapter, it will be seen that the geographical region described above is not congruent with boundaries of a group of chiefdoms. Thus the chiefdoms Jong, Yawbeko, Bum, Kpaka and Panga Kabonde extend territorially beyond the geographical region defined here. (Map 4) However since Sewa Mendeland and the Southern Littoral Region are two qualitatively different conceptions this is not surprising. Nevertheless and bearing in mind the difficulty of drawing a line such as to delineate that those on the northern side are Eastern Mende and Kpaa Mende while those persons to the south are Sewa Mende it is often useful to do so. Thus the term Sewa Mende refers to the following chiefdoms: Bendu Cha,



Nongoba Bulom, Kwamebai Krim, Panga Krim, Yawkemo Kpukumu Krim and Mano Sakrim.

To conclude this chapter on the general geographical background, the various ecological zones will be summarised. These zones are exploited in fundamentally different ways giving rise to differing land use systems, the subject of the next chapter.

- (1) Ngiiyema (upland-place) refers to the region of red-earth soils. Sometimes it is described as kpote, a word of Bulom origin meaning 'mud'. Dispersed throughout the upland are swamps of raphia called yenge.
- (2) Nanyawaima (great-sandy-place) refers to the southern half of the area characterised by a soil of almost pure sand. Large areas are however overlain with a fertile alluvial soil. These alluvial flats are characterised by three principal features. The river levees (komboya), the riverain grasslands (bati) and swamps of raphia vinifera and anthostema spp., called voi.

CHAPTER III

THE SYSTEMS OF LAND USE

We have already seen that there are a number of distinct land types. In this chapter the different methods of land use employed to exploit these zones will be described. A considerable amount of space will be devoted to a description of mechanical cultivation and its development in the region. Mechanical cultivation, however, affects only one of the ecological zones, the riverain grasslands (bati) but indirectly has repercussions throughout the region. In general, this chapter will deal with the farming systems of each zone and their inter-relation in terms of the agricultural syndrome of each zone.

A report¹ published in 1939 presents some information on the farming system of the riverain grasslands. It would appear that despite the inherently fertile nature of the soil a form of shifting cultivation was used. In the upland areas the practice of shifting cultivation, or bush fallowing, is necessary to allow the regeneration of the vegetation and hence the restoration of soil fertility. In the riverain grasslands shifting cultivation was necessary for different reasons. With the removal of the grass (rottboellia exaltata) and cultivation, weeds, especially wild rice (oryza barthii), became excessive and after about three years the land was allowed to revert to the original grass. The

1. G. M. Roddan, Report on the existing and potential rice lands East of the Bagru river and including Sherbro Island, Freetown, Government Printers, 1939.

grass combined with the annual flooding, anything from fifteen to thirty feet, is sufficient to smother other vegetation. Clearing this grass is extremely arduous work and the farmers agree that brushing upland forest is easier. A very sharp cutlass must be maintained in order to sever the stalks and, after burning, the debris of charred stalks must be gathered and cleared. The stalks of the grass are covered in very fine 'hairs' which easily pierce the skin to set up an uncomfortable, not to say painful, irritation. Furthermore there is no shade as there is when brushing undergrowth in the forest. For these reasons then, prior to the introduction of mechanical cultivation, only a very small proportion of the land, 3400 acres out of a possible 64,000, was used to grow rice.¹

Brushing and clearing would be done, of course, only when the flood had subsided, that is during February and March. After burning and clearing the land would be hoed and simultaneously sown with rice in May. From May until the rising flood forced the people off the land, weeding of the rice fields would be done. In January the harvest would begin. Brushing, hoeing and broadcasting is done by the men, weeding by the women and harvesting by both.

However despite the fact that the grasslands will yield up to 40 bushels of raw husk rice per acre, the people held cassava, grown elsewhere, to be their staple crop and rice only secondary in their diet. The introduction of mechanical cultivation has changed this in so far as rice is now a staple though cassava is still regarded as an important food

1. ibid., P.11.

and almost equal quantities are eaten. Secondly, mechanical cultivation has permitted the exploitation of the grasslands to such an extent that they are the focus of agricultural interest for all the households of the riverside villages. Before going on to describe in detail the farming system on the grasslands it might be useful to outline the history and development of the mechanical cultivation scheme.

In 1947 data was collected on periods and depths of flooding and local farming techniques with a view to the possible use of tractors and ploughs on the grasslands by the Agricultural Department of the Ministry of Natural Resources. The West African Rice Mission concluded in 1948 that 50,000 tons of paddy rice could be produced annually from the Sewa Waanje grasslands. The following year the first land was ploughed by tractor at Subu. The plot was sown with Indo-China Blanc seed and farmed by a local farmer. The plot produced $2\frac{1}{2}$ tons of rice. In 1950 a further 69 acres were ploughed for farmers at Subu, and in 1951, 282 acres. By this time the advantages of ploughed land were apparent to farmers who now freely moved in to clear the elephant grass with cutlasses prior to ploughing. The thickness and size of the grass made it impossible to plough in.

By 1953 1,178 acres were ploughed in that year and a station at Solon was under construction where machinery could be serviced and repaired. Wild rice, a prevalent weed, had been eliminated by deep ploughing while trials were proceeding to establish the optimum sowing date on various sites. In 1957, 5,385 acres were ploughed and the scheme was well established. The early achievements were remarkable, particularly

as they were carried out under the most makeshift and difficult conditions where tents and trees gave accommodation and storage, empty petrol drums and planks the often alarming but sometimes only means of water borne transport for tractors and machinery. This phase, thanks to the pioneers had been replaced by comparative order and reasonable facilities, by base workshops for each unit, by houses and stores and the use of a landing-craft.

At this stage it might be worthwhile to review the emerging pattern. From the beginning ploughing was done by the Department of Agriculture: they owned the machinery, employed fitters, mechanics and field staff, ploughing land by contract for individual farmers. Thus the local farmers were from the beginning essentially non-participants in the administration and policy making of the ploughing authority. The latter offer a service which the farmer may or may not use as he wishes. In this way the annual appearance and disappearance of the tractors and implements leaving behind tilled land took on the attributes, as far as the indigenous farmers were concerned, of the annual flooding of the river. Both are essential to their newly adopted economic syndrome but both appear equally uncontrollable but predictable. Mechanical cultivation became, and remains, one of the givens in the ecological setting which the farmer could exploit.

On the land itself, though the Department of Agriculture were officially ploughing land for individuals, they were in fact ploughing as units large sites averaging 230 acres (excluding the unique Torma site of over 1,000 acres). The field staff of the Department were responsible

for assessing the acreages required and after ploughing, allocating plots according to the acreage paid for by individuals. The collection of ploughing fees proved difficult for the small number of staff in relation to the large number of farmers paying for plots, hence the co-operation of the Chiefdom N.A.'s was recruited and the collection of fees became the responsibility of the local administrations. The Department of Agriculture then collected a lump sum from the two District Councils involved, Bonthe and Pujeh. This quickly proved unworkable due to the incompetence of local administration and in 1958 the responsibility reverted to the Department of Agriculture. In 1967 the position was formally the same. The Rice Corporation, who took over from the Department of Agriculture in 1965 were still ploughing plots for individuals. However a new factor had emerged, the Rice Farmers Marketing Co-operative Societies upon whom, as we shall see later, devolved the task of collecting the ploughing fees and generally performing the role of articulators between the farmers and the ploughing authority.

Until 1958 ploughing fees were paid in arrears, that is the farmer paid when the ploughing produced its harvest. In 1958 ten shillings were demanded in advance and the balance of £2 10s paid as before and in 1959 all fees were to be paid in advance. This change caused a drop in acreages ploughed but in the riverain grasslands this was not as marked as elsewhere, for example the Bolilands of Sierra Leone. In effect the situation remained unchanged after the farmers had paid for ploughing twice out of the proceeds of 1959 harvest. Thereafter he continued to pay after he had harvested as he had done previously.

Seed harrowing was introduced on a wider scale to meet the popular demand for this additional service for which an extra ten shillings is charged per acre. Among other significant developments was the implementation of the policy decision to encourage producer co-operatives, that is, co-operatives of farmers owning their own machinery and implements. In 1958 three such co-operatives were in operation but they have always been inconsistent in their ability to plough a regular acreage and the Division of Agriculture were often in the position of having to complete the ploughing on their sites. The collection of ploughing fees remained a problem even though the Division of Agriculture delegated this task to the Co-operative Department from whom they extracted a guarantee to pay for work done for members of the various co-operative societies.

Finally to conclude this brief outline of the history of mechanical cultivation in the riverain grasslands something might be said about costs since this is normally the focus of arguments relating to mechanical cultivation in the tropics. In 1964 the total revenue from fees amounted to £34,315 and expenditure on fuel, spares and labour amounted to £15,695. With 10,460 acres ploughed and seed harrowed this amounts to a recurrent expenditure of approximately £1 10s per acre. This figure does not include depreciation on equipment nor the costs of supervisory staff. In 1957 an estimate of total costs including such items was made. Depreciation worked out at £5 8s per acre and senior staff costs at £5 per acre bringing the total costs per acre to around £12 of which only £3 10s is recovered in fees. This rating of depreciation included such items as a landing craft valued at £15,000 and spare parts in stock worth £50,000. Depreciation was calculated at 20% per annum on

machinery and 5% on buildings. On the other hand this expenditure on the part of the Government does contribute ten thousand tons of paddy rice to the economy worth approximately £350,000 to the Gross National Product.

In 1966 the newly constituted Rice Corporation took over the production activities of the Division of Agriculture, that is the mechanical cultivation. This change involved little organizational and technical change. Since I left Sierra Leone in 1968 mechanical operations have subsequently reverted to the Division of Agriculture.

Let us now consider the land use pattern established on the riverain grasslands as a result of the introduction of mechanical cultivation.

First of all not all the grasslands are cultivated, in fact only about a quarter or a fifth of the possible area. Ploughing begins on the various sites according to their height above the river. Thus work begins on the lower sites immediately the straw is burned after harvesting is completed, usually around late March, and finishes on the higher sites at the end of April. This difference in height is very important since it would be extremely difficult if not impossible to plough all the sites simultaneously. Until 1967 machinery was transported by a single landing-craft capable of carrying only one machine and its implement. There are two main stations, Torma Bum and Solon, where machinery is serviced and stored and from where it is distributed at the beginning of the season. Long delays are often caused by simple factors. Thus on Gandema site in 1967, three tractors lay idle for four days when their electric starters failed. Two miles away at Solon were tractors that could

be used to tow start those at Gandema but a two hundred yard stretch of water intervened. Occasionally a combination of several mechanical failures combined with an unusually early flood will ruin many acres of land as regards rice planting. Farmers who have sown on ploughed land only to see their seed washed away are refunded their ploughing fees to the extent of the acreage lost.

After ploughing each farmer broadcasts his rice seed on his plot. The dominant variety is Indo-China Blanc which is sown in the deep flooding areas of the bati. Near the levee where the flood water is not quite so deep, farmers like to sow Radin China. Both these varieties are exotic and are referred to as puu bei. There is also a local rice (kongbati) which has at least three varieties, kongbat gbogboi (red-kongbati) which is sown on the levee, kongbati lelle (black kongbati) which is a floating variety and sown in the deep flooding area and kongbati gowei (white kongbati) which is also sown on the levee. Indo-China Blanc and Radin China easily outyield the indigenous equivalents and hence are far more popular.

When broadcasting is finished the site is seed harrowed and this completes the work done by machinery.

As soon as the rice germinates weeding begins and the plot is weeded until the rising flood forces the workers off the land. Most plots are weeded once but sometimes may be weeded a second time. While the weeding is done the rice is transplanted within the plot. That is, where there is a particularly thick patch of germinating rice some of the plants will be distributed among more sparse areas. Weeding (ngulugbua) is the task of women though men will often help the women to weed the plot. From

the end of June until the middle of December, when harvesting begins, the rice in the riverain grasslands is ignored.

Harvesting is by far the most arduous and labour consuming task now that the difficulties of clearing brushing etc., have been eliminated by mechanization. A young adult male working ten hours a day would take over three months to harvest a five acre plot yielding thirty bushels per acre.¹ This is probably a conservative estimate and it should also be borne in mind that the population is not made up of young adult males, that the working day is probably nearer eight hours and that thirty five bushels to the acre is very common. The principal factor here is the severe lodging of the rice. Being a deep water variety it develops a stalk up to fifteen feet long which, as the flood subsides, collapses into a tangled mass. Each panicle has then to be harvested individually using a small blade. During the harvest birds are a problem, especially in the morning and late afternoon and it is the task of the young boys and youths armed with slings and projectiles made of dried mud to keep them away from the rice. A handful of harvested rice is tied with a straw and stacked in the field with other like bundles. Finally it will be pulled in and piled in one or two large stacks near the farm house. Harvesting is a lengthy process and it may take up to three months to clear any one site. Thus during the 1967-8 season on Gandema site, harvesting began on the 31st of December. The first plot was completed on the 20th February and the last was cleared on the 25th March. Before ploughing begins the

1. Based on observations and trials carried out by the researcher. The following is a typical result:
Harvester: young adult male, ground conditions: patches of ankle deep water,
rice variety: Indo-Chine Blanc.
 Total Time Start/Finish 232 minutes Yielding 0.56 bshls
 Harvesting 208 minutes Area Harvested 696 sq. ft.
 Resting 24 minutes
 Yield per man hour start/finish 0.145 bshls Yield per acre 35.4 bshls.
 excluding rests 0.162 bshls

straw is burned. However since individual plots are contiguous on any one site the straw cannot be fired until the last farmer has pulled in all his harvested rice.

Basically, then, the system is similar in timing and operations to that before the introduction of mechanical cultivation. There are however certain crucial differences, the limiting factor as regards the size of the plot is the man power a farmer can produce for harvesting while previously brushing and clearing were the limiting factors. Secondly, prior to mechanical cultivation a farmer could operate independantly of others as regards the timing of operations. Farms would not be contiguous but scattered around the grasslands and thus he could burn the straw after harvesting or the debris after brushing a new farm without the possibility of firing his neighbour's crops. The present system of unitary sites and integral plots necessitates a degree of synchronization of operations, the implications of which will be discussed and examined later. Meanwhile let us proceed by discussing the land use pattern of the river levee (komboya).

The levee is distinct yet inseparable from the grassland in the overall farming pattern. It is important, as we have seen, in providing settlement sites above the level of the flood waters where it is particularly high. Elsewhere it forms the sites of more or less temporary villages. Farmers may sleep in their riverside village and go out to the rice fields during the day where this is practicable in terms of distance. In this case he will build only a small farm house (poi) on the levee next to his rice field. Sometimes however it is necessary to build a more permanent dwelling where he and his household will live during the dry season.

Since suitably wide and high levees are infrequent, it is usual to find congeries of such dwellings as named villages, a pattern which suits the Sewa Mende ideal of nucleated settlement. During the wet season these villages are abandoned when the farmers and their households return to their home villages. Whether a farmer's dry season house is near or at a distance from his rice plot, the characteristic farmhouse is constructed as before. The levee is, then, distinguishable from the grasslands in that it is an area of temporary or semi-permanent settlement which the grassland is not. Concomitant with this feature is the number of shade trees which are planted on the levee of which the mango is notable. But the levee is also important as regards the crops grown on it.

As soon as the flood subsides and the farmers return to the fields, the first task is always that of clearing the komboya for cassava and sweet-potato farms. These are usually around the farm house but where the levee is not extensive may be located elsewhere up or down the river. Condiments such as peppers and beniseed are also grown. Bananas and palm trees are sometimes planted around the farmhouse or dwelling both for their shade and their fruit. Like the adjacent rice farm in the grassland no fallow or rotation is required or practiced. The same piece of land is put down to cassava or sweet potato year after year without any reduction in yield. Because of its fertility the levee is valued for growing such supplementary crops and is often continuously cultivated for several miles up and down the river.

However despite the fact that cassava grown on the levee will outyield cassava grown on sand or the red earth lateritic soil by several

tons per acre it has one inherent drawback, the fact that for half the year it is either under water or severely waterlogged. This means that the crops must be harvested completely before the onset of the floods if they are not to be rotted by excessive water. The sweet-potato can be transplanted to perennially dry land and with the onset of the rains and the rising river level farmers are busying ferrying their sweet-potatoes to the village where they will be transplanted into gardens prepared around the circumference of the village. Conversely at the beginning of the dry season and the move to the rice fields they are transplanted out on the levee. Cassava, however, does not lend itself to transplanting and the tubers cannot be stored for more than a few days after harvesting before becoming inedible. As a temporary expedient the plants may be inverted in the ground, that is, with the tubers in the air. Parboiling will allow them to be stored for about two weeks. Grating and drying will produce farina which will keep indefinitely but this is laborious task also requiring grating and drying equipment. For these reasons a farmer may be unable to produce on the levee enough cassava to meet his needs for the year. Furthermore the farmer faces the problem of acquiring fresh stalks of cassava to plant out on the levee at the beginning of the dry season as those of the previous season will, by then, be dead. The dry land cassava farmer does not face these problems as we shall see.

The levee and grassland are each an integral part of the riverain farming system though physiographically distinct. Each rice farm is anchored, as it were, to a complementary area of levee where the farm house is located. The farm house forms the focus of the domestic group on the farm and around it are the gardens of cassava, sweet potato

and condiments. Beyond them is the river, rich in fish. One may contrast here, as the Sewa Mende do, life in the rice farms and levee during the dry season with the routine of the village during the wet season. On the farms there is plenty of food, the raphia palms of the swamp (voi) are accessible for sweet palm wine, there is much coming and going of people and there is generally a heightened vitality. During the day the riverside villages are virtually empty. While during the wet season, farm work is at a minimum, the store of food may be causing some anxiety and the rain confines people to their verandahs and doorways in morose groups. There is no dancing or telling of stories and the people are in their beds early to escape the relatively cold dampness of the night, while snakes and insects attempt to share with them the few remaining dry sites as the flood waters rise.

So far we have dealt with the two categories of land referred to by the Sewa Mende as bati and komboya. They are of primary interest to all the farmers of the riverside villages. The upland farmers, on the other hand, though they may have some interests in bati and komboya look to the perennially dry land, the bush of the sandy zone or the upland. Both ecological zones are referred to by the single term ndogboi. However, the potentialities of each differ and hence give rise to slightly different patterns of land use. In fact it is the upland or red earth lateritic land that is of primary importance to the upland farmer because of its relatively more fertile soil which enables it to yield both rice and cassava. The sandy area is suitable only for cassava although there is, apparently, a local variety of rice (sokongui) which is very tolerant of such soils.

We have already described cassava farming on the komboya and we must now look at the operations and system involved when the crop is grown on the sandy bush. Basically it involves the characteristic bush-fallowing technique. On this land a new farm must be cleared out of the forest each year. Brushing of the forest is a technically complicated process and involves not one operation but several. They are as follows:

1. ndogboi luwele (bush-brushing) This involves outlassing the undergrowth while leaving the larger trees standing. This operation produces nduwe logboi (brushed bush) and delimits the area of the future farm.
2. kpoi This involves felling the large trees with an axe. This can only be done when 1. is finished.
3. nyengbei That is cutting up the large trees to ensure their complete combustion. With the completion of nyengbei the area is now a farm (kpsa) and is no longer bush (ndogboi).
4. moi (fire) At the appropriate time the debris is burned.
5. nglanglei (one by one) This involves going round the farm preparing any timber that has not burned satisfactorily for a second burn.
6. nglanga ko molei (one by one logs burning) burning the timber of 5.

Brushing and preparing a farm in the sandy area and also in the red earth upland requires a considerable amount of labour. But it is also restricted by the fact that adult men only can brush bush satisfactorily. Furthermore time limits the area brushed since an adequate period during the

dry season must be allowed for the timber to dry and become combustible after brushing and felling.

With the completion of the last burning the farm is ready to be planted with cassava. At intervals of about three feet a shallow hole is dug with a few strokes of a hoe. Into this three pieces of cassava stalk are inserted. During its growth the cassava is weeded. The timing of these operations is very important. The work should begin by January in order that the felled timber will be combustible and easily fired before the onset of the rains in May-June. Planting will be done towards the end of April or beginning of May. By September the first tubers will be ready for harvesting. The farm will continue to provide cassava until the following September, thereafter the tubers degenerate in quality and become inedible. The farm is allowed to revert to forest. Meanwhile a new farm has been brushed and planted with stems from the previous farm and is now ready to be harvested. Thus in this system there is a year round supply of cassava the continuity of which is reflected in the movement of cassava stems from the farm being harvested to the new one being planted. As we noted above there is no such continuity in the cassava gardens of the levee.

On the red earth upland a new farm is made each year as on the sandy soil. However the higher fertility of the soil allows a crop of rice in the first year followed by cassava. The rice is sown broadcast onto the newly burnt farm and then hoed into the ground. This is done in May. In October the harvest can begin, to finish the following month. The following April cassava stems will be planted in the same farm in the

usual manner. Supplementary crops and vegetables will be grown around the farm house which is constructed on the farm.

The sandy bush and especially the upland bush is rich in palm trees and though they are not cultivated their fruits are regularly harvested. This is done after planting, in May and June. The harvesting of the fruits is done by the young men and though dangerous is less demanding economically than the processing which follows. Processing, to produce palm oil (ngulo gbo) from the pericarp, requires certain items of capital equipment, namely a large boiler, bath and a number of containers. The boiler is usually an 80 gallon steel drum and the bath is either made out of concrete sunk into the ground or improvised by the use of a dug-out canoe. After boiling the fruits and contents of the boiler are turned out into the bath of water where the oil separates out to float on the surface to be skimmed off. The residue of fibres and nuts is taken out and separated. The fibre is usually discarded though it may be used to make mattresses or pillows. The nuts will later be cracked singly between two stones and the kernels sold to a trader ultimately for export. The oil is, however, by far the most important product being highly valued for culinary purposes as well as a source of cash through the sale of any surplus. In view of the capital investment required few individuals own the necessary equipment. Those without can either sell fruit to an owner at a rate of 100 heads of fruit for £1 or hire the equipment if the owner agrees. 100 heads of fruit will yield approximately eight gallons of oil which may then be sold for £3. If equipment is hired the owner will ask for seven pints of oil from every drum boiled.

Rice, cassava and palm oil are the main activities of the upland farmer and the latter is especially important as a source of cash. On the riverside, however, it is the rice surplus that is the major source of cash.

Two zones have yet to be discussed from the land use aspect, the swamps in the riverain grasslands (voi) and the inland swamps (yenge). Upland farmers sometimes supplement their crop of dry rice by cultivating swamp rice in the inland swamps. Though the same tract of swamp is sown broadcast each year no attempt is made to clear the area completely by stumping and removing all the vegetation. Hence brushing is carried out each year. However, a successful burn is less certain under swamp conditions and therefore a swamp farm must remain secondary to an upland dry rice farm.

Both types of swamp are, however, rich in raphia palms. There is still a degree of confusion, botanically, regarding this plant but it would appear the raphia vinifera (nduvui) is dominant in the riverain swamps (voi) while raphia gracilis (kili) predominates in the more accessible inland swamps. Vinifera yields palm wine, raphia and piassava: gracilis, piassava and thatching material. In Sewa Mende land however, it is seldom used for thatching since the long grasses (fonii) of the parkland zones are abundant and preferable. Piassava is obtained from the mid-rib of the leaf by soaking (retting) it in water for a considerable time, up to two months. The mid-rib rots away leaving strong pliable fibres which are used in modest quantities for building fish traps and as cord for other binding purposes. It is also however, produced in large quantities to be sold for cash and ultimate export to Europe where it is used in the iron

and steel industry and for making brushes and brooms. There are three grades of piassava established by the Sierra Leone Produce Marketing Board (S.L.P.M.B.). The best grade fetching the highest price is produced from vinifera combined with a long retting period. Most piassava sold for cash is however obtained from gracilis and the retting process is hastened by boiling in large drums which produces an inferior fibre. In an attempt to speed up retting even more, producers in 1966 boiled the ribs in caustic soda and though they managed to sell the result to local buyers the S.L.P.M.B. were unable to sell it to European consumers and it had to be destroyed. Like the rice grown on the mechanically cultivated grasslands and the palm oil of the upland piassava has its own indigenous uses and value but the vast proportion of piassava is produced for cash. But unlike the other major products it is essentially a supplementary activity and produced by individuals contingently upon an immediate need for cash. Hence the interest in a quick realization and the resort to quickest permissible procedure. Virtually all the piassava is produced during the rainy season when farm work is at a minimum.

Before proceeding to consider the interrelationship of the various zones in terms of the differing systems of land use, it will be necessary to complete the picture by saying something about fishing. Clearly this is a more significant activity of the riverside than elsewhere and is carried out on the rivers themselves and on the grasslands during the flood. Three principal techniques are used, traps, nets and lines with subtypes in each of them. Traps and lines are used by the river banks and in the grasslands while nets are used in the river. They are left unattended after setting in the evening until they are gathered

the following morning. But most often fish are pulled from the river using a simple rod and line by youths and boys as the need arises.

As the flood subsides it leaves pools in the grasslands and these are raided systematically by bands of women using their own special nets (bimbei).

Fishing is a paramount activity in some areas, as at Minna Nyeni and Mano Kuranko on the Waanje where it flows close to the Atlantic. Smoked fish are exported to the hinterland via Torma Bum. At the mouth of the Sewa, from Garinga west, fishing, using lines with multiple hooks, is carried out in the estuary for sale in Bonthe.

So far we have discussed each cropping system separately. however they fall into two groups in terms of the economic syndrome of any one farmer. Thus a farmer engaged in cultivating the grasslands will also have interests in the levee and perhaps the sandy bush. He will not be concerned with upland rice and palm oil production. Likewise an upland rice farmer will not be interested in mechanical cultivation and the riverside syndrome but concentrate on upland rice, cassava and palm oil. There are important exceptions to this generalization as we shall see but as an initial grouping it is quite valid and corresponds to the division of the region into the two sub-regions discussed in the previous chapter. However, the two syndromes do not operate independantly and it is to their interrelation at the level of land use systems that we shall turn to consider now.

<u>Crop system</u>	<u>Month</u>											
	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J
Upland rice	f			mf	mf		m	m		m	m	f
Cassava								m		mf		(upland)
Palm oil										mf	mf	mf
Cassava	f						m	m		mf	mf	f (sandy bush)
River levee	mf					m			f			mf
Grasslands	mf						mf	mf	mf	m	mf	mf (riverside)
Hypothetical Movement of Labour	m (1)			mf (2)	mf (2)	m (3)	f	f (4)	f	f (5)		
Actual movement							f	f	f	f		

Fig. 2: Labour demands on principal crops

Figure 2 shows the labour demands of the various cropping systems during the year. The differential labour requirements are easily discernable and allow a hypothetical movement of labour to be postulated. This has been shown in the figure. There are five separate occasions when a labour differential occurs but in only two of these does any actual movement of labour from one subregion into another take place.

In July (1) male labour is required on the riverside to weed rice, transplant sweet potato to the village and harvest the cassava on the levee. The demands, however, are not excessive and the farmer can carry out the operations without resorting to extra domestic group help. Hence no movement of labour occurs. In October and November (2) the upland rice harvest is underway but any household capable of making an upland rice farm will be able to harvest the resulting crop without resorting to extra help. Hence again no movement takes place. In December (3) men are brushing the levee but again the demands are not excessive and well within the capabilities of the riverside household. However, during January, February and March (4) there is a dependance on the part of the riverside households on the upland and the postulated movement of female labour does in fact take place. This labour is required to harvest the rice sown in the mechanically cultivated grasslands where farmers explicitly rely on securing extra domestic group help for this particular operation in the riverside syndrome. In return there is a movement of rice from the riverside into the upland. An extra domestic group helper is rewarded at a rate of one day harvesting for herself for every three days harvesting for the owner of the rice farm, plus of course food during her sojourn. Thus approximately 25% of all the rice harvested on the

grasslands by labour from the upland is consumed in the upland syndrome. This labour is largely female for various reasons, among them the fact that the males in the upland are engaged in the brushing and clearing of upland rice and cassava farms. This is a considerable quantity of rice and, as the riverside farmer comes to rely on securing labour from the upland, so, on the other hand, the upland farmer relies on participating in the harvest and hence increasing his effective production of rice. This rice, brought into the economy of the upland allows the release, to a limited extent, of factors of production from subsistence upland rice production to the production of palm oil for cash. If figure 2 is again referred to it will be seen that there is a conflicting demand for labour in the simultaneous operations of palm oil production and the preparation of upland rice farms. In April (5) there is a slight movement of female labour from the riverside to the upland at the end of the harvest where they participate in the processing of palm oil but this movement is very small relative to the movement from the upland to the grassland during harvesting.

In terms of the cropping systems themselves, that of cassava has an important role in the interrelation of the two regions which highlights the significance of the sandy bush zone. In the discussion of land use we saw how cassava production on the levee is limited because flooding forces its complete harvest and immediate consumption. This also breaks the continuity of the regime since fresh cassava stems for planting must be sought outside the system. Cassava stems can be brought from the upland cassava farms or from cassava farms made on the sandy bush. Such farms are not incorporated in the riverside syndrome and hence the riverside farmer is again dependant on the upland farmer. However a few

riverside farmers make a cassava farm on the sandy bush and by doing this they sever their dependence on an outside source and the system becomes self sufficient (Fig. 3). In view of the advantages to be gained by doing this it is interesting to note that very few riverside farmers do so. There are again several factors but of relevance here is the factor of labour requirements. If we refer back to figure 1 we can see that the riverside farmer can afford to brush a cassava farm only at the expense of reducing his rice harvesting potential on the mechanically cultivated grasslands.

Generally there is a movement of labour, cassava, cassava stems and palm oil from the upland region into the riverside area and on the other hand a movement of rice and fish from the riverside to the upland. There is, however, a possible balance of trade deficit in favour of the upland region which has to be made up for in cash. The principal item here, it would appear, is palm oil which is paid for in cash from the proceeds of the sale of surplus rice produced on the grasslands.

Early in my fieldwork an informant made the paradoxical, ^{remark} in the face of the extensive and impressive ploughing operations going on in the fertile grasslands, that he regarded his upland farming activities as his principal source of wealth. The sense of this is perhaps now apparent and will become more so as the exposition proceeds.

CHAPTER IV

THE STRUCTURAL CATEGORIES OF THE SEWA MENDE SOCIAL SYSTEM

In this chapter we shall discuss certain elements of the social structure, in particular those concerned with kinship. This involves a consideration of certain concepts relating to territorial divisions and the supernatural as well as the system of kinship and affinity itself.

Concepts concerning territorial division

ndoloi, the land, the country, the chiefdom.
ndomei, the ground.
ndogboi, the bush
tei, the village.
kuwui, place.

We have already seen how the Sewa Mende recognise and label the various ecological zones described in Chapter IV. All go to make up what Sewa Mende call ndoloi, the land, the country or the chiefdom. In this sense it is a unit and cannot be carved up for the purposes of ownership. It is 'held' by the Paramount Chief (ndo mahei loi houma). Ndo mahei translates literally as 'land chief'. When talking of the ownership of land the term ndomei, which may be translated as 'ground' is used. It is not 'held' (hou) but owned (nda) as for instance 'Humpa nda lomei lo' (Humpa owns that ground). In general the principal classification of the land (ndoloi) is into ndogboi (bush) and tei (village).

Ndogboi literally means 'land-red/ripe/dangerous' and it might be more accurate in some ways if the more evocative English term

'jungle' were used rather than the neutral 'bush'. To be in the bush (ndogboihu) is to be in danger and this is often very real due to the presence of poisonous snakes, crocodiles and formerly leopards and buffaloes. It is here too that most injuries through brushing farms with cutlasses and axes and climbing palm trees occur. But the bush is also ripe and fertile. Such land can be brushed to make a rice or cassava farm that will produce a good return of food. Out of the bush come also the accessories that Sewa Mende require such as timber for house construction and firewood, thatch and mud, palm oil and raphia, palm fibre for fishing line, cotton, animals for meat and hides and so on. Not only does the bush provide such items over and above mere food it is also a pharmacy of medicines. It is then aptly termed 'red-land'.

If a person is not ndogboihu (in the bush) then he is teihu (in the village). Tei has the more general meaning of container or box, but when used unqualified usually refers to the village. Thus ngombu tei (fire container) is a match box; nonii tei (bird container) is a bird's nest. The term tei meaning a village is in many ways appropriate. As one emerges from the forest or bush into a village it is, in fact, rather like entering a large box without a lid. The term is also apt in the more abstract sense of the village as being the place where people are to be found and events occur. Though people work and spend much of their time in the bush it is, naturally, to the village one goes if one wants to find people. The village, then, is the focus of social activities. Corresponding to the ndo mahei (land chief) there is a ta mahei, village chief. Or rather, numerous village chiefs since there is more than one village in Sewa Mende land. Villages are named after some local

geographical feature or the founding ancestor.

Each village has a semee. This is an opensided building to be found somewhere near the middle of the settlement and is the meeting place of the adult men. Here travellers may rest in one of the hammocks before proceeding and where disputes and the issues of village politics will be dealt with. The building and maintenance of the semee is the responsibility of the whole village led by the village chief.

On the edge of the village next to the bush is the sowowe, the house of the sowii, the Sande Society official. In this house the sowii and her assistants will live along with the regalia and medicine of the Society. This is also the place where pregnant women go into confinement and is, so to speak, the village maternity hospital.

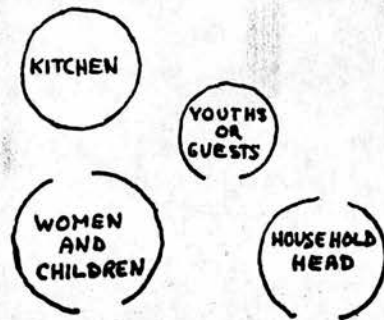
Near the village is an area of dense forest which is never brushed to make farms and might be marked by a high cotton tree (ceiba pentandra). In this place, (ngola) dwell the spirits of the founders and their descendants who resided in the village, the ngafanga.

Sewa Mende houses (pele, pl., pelesia) are small and round (approximately six foot high walls and fifteen feet in diameter) and clustered in a rather haphazard fashion. Where there is white clay readily available then the upper half of the wall is whitewashed. It is not usual to divide the interior into rooms since each building would make up a single functional room and several buildings several rooms or one 'house' in our sense of the term. A household will require a women's

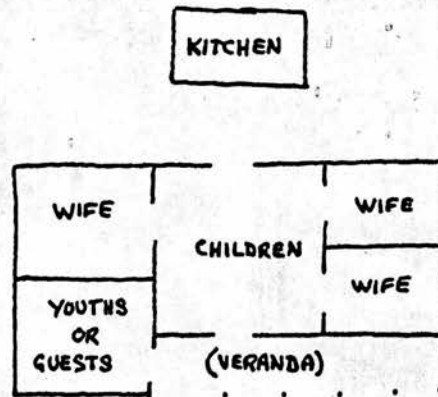
house where the husband's wives and young children will sleep, his own house, a house for youths or a visiting male kinsman or two separate buildings for both. In other words a household requires at least three buildings, (Fig. 4).

Square houses are now, however, as common as round buildings, the design having been consciously copied from Europeans. A plurality of separate buildings with single rooms is replaced by a single building with a plurality of rooms. Children sleep in the central room while the small rooms off are allocated to separate wives. The husband may have no room of his own but sleeps with each wife three nights in rotation. There is usually a room with a separate entrance, the veranda room, where youths or guests may be accommodated. This arrangement is different in one respect from the traditional system in that it is the husband who goes to his wives whereas traditionally each wife goes to the husband's house from the women's house. This point, which could have had interesting implications, is in fact insignificant.

The important factor in determining house sites within a village are the ngafanga. New houses are erected preferably on or nearby the sites of houses one time occupied by kinsmen. Old sites or ruins (tomboya) are the haunts of the ngafanga and one can deal more effectively with the ghost of a kinsman than with that of a stranger. If, however, the housebuilder is a stranger then persons are found to pour a libation for the ngafanga and to introduce the newcomer to them. Sometimes houses are built on land cleared out of the bush where no-one is known to have built before. Nevertheless, it is likely that unknown ngafanga are around



A



B

FIG 4 HOUSE PLANS

and again a libation will be offered and the housebuilder will introduce himself and the inhabitants of his new house. In all cases the approval of the village chief is required. Conversely there is a reluctance to abandon houses and house sites since this would be tantamount to disowning the ngafanga, the ancestors, who dislike to see their houses become ruins. Displeased ngafanga are to be avoided since they are reckoned to be the cause of misfortune and afflictions. Thus it is quite common to find an old person sleeping in a tumbledown house in a village or one or two ancient persons living in the last remaining house of a deserted village in the bush. Rather than leave to stay with kinsmen elsewhere they would prevent the place becoming a tomboya, ruin.

Despite the importance of ngafanga there are no formal shrines erected to them in or around the house. Offerings to the household ngafanga are made at the head of the bed of the person making the offering or of the person on whose behalf the ngafanga are being propitiated. This is called ngukoi goile, giving to the head of the bed. However various devices are sometimes attached to the house to keep out ngafanga, witches (honabla), and snakes and wild animals. They are called respectively, bonda, kpakpei, and hale. A bonda will be hung above the doorway to keep a troublesome ngafa out if a diviner (totomoi) reckons it necessary. A kpakpei is buried in the site of a proposed house before construction begins. A kpakpei does not keep witches out but catches them and flogs them. Snakes are kept at bay by a hale made of circlets of the bark of the ndandei tree (dichostrachys glomerata) hung from the eaves.

The concern with locality is carried further in the term kuwui,

Kuwui is difficult to translate into English because it is relative and in use receives exact definition from the context. I have translated the term as 'place'. A more accurate but clumsy expression might be 'any demarcated or bounded segment of ground'. The term is used in the following ways. Thus ngi liima nya kuwuihu lo uttered in a rice field would be taken to mean 'I am going to that section of the field marked out for me to harvest/hoe/weed' or simply 'I am going to my place'. Spoken in the village it would express 'I am going to that part of the village recognized as the section where I have my houses' or again 'I am going to my place'.¹ Despite this apparent vagueness, it is along with the concept tei (village) the principal means of identification for the Sewa Mende. To establish who a person is, one will ask for the village where his mother and father lived together (bi yetahualo mi?) and where his 'place' is (bi yekuwuhu lo mi?) It should be pointed out that the two need not coincide: a person's 'place' is not necessarily the same village as that of his mother and father. If he is an adult male then he may be living in another village with other kinsmen and a family of his own in which case this village will constitute his kuwui. Likewise an adult female's 'place' is her husband's which is likely to be a different village from that of her mother and father.

Finally while discussing territorial divisions something might be said about the division of a chiefdom into a number of administrative sections under a section chief. In fact 'sections' and 'section chiefs' are exotic having been introduced by the British administration. When

1. cf. Little, 1951, op. cit., P.101, where kuwui is rendered 'compound'.

referring to 'section chiefs' the people often use the same English phrase though sometimes the expression kpate mahei is heard. Translated literally kpate mahei means quite simply 'wealth chief'. Traditionally men who became exceptionally wealthy in a locality dispensed the functions of a petty chief, hospitality, representation, judgement, advice etc.. This situation was essentially fluid and contingent, anathema to an administration who pinned down the sphere of influence to a specific section of the chiefdom and formalised succession to office. This has produced some interesting results. In Gbap, Lamina is an old and respected elder and also section chief of Gbap section. However he is never referred to or addressed as 'kpate mahei' because he is quite poor and the Sewa Mende are sensitive to, though masters of, sarcasm.

Concepts concerning aggregates of people

nunga (sing., nu), persons, people.

There are three different classifications of the category nunga, people. The first is based on a consideration of sex and age, the second on kinship and marriage and the third on elements of both kinship and territoriality. People then, are in the first instance, classed as:

ndopoisia (sing., ndopo), children
hiinga (sing., hini), men
nyahanga (sing., nyaha), women

The class hiinga (men) is further divided into,

koonga, young men
kpakuisia, old men, elders.

All persons who have not been initiated are ndopoisia, children. The term literally means 'those left behind' referring to the fact that parents and other adults in the normal course of events will die before

them. Initiation into the male secret society (polei hale, Poroo Society) of female society (sande hale, Sande Society or sometimes Bundu Society) of all persons divides the undifferentiated class of ndopoisia (children) into men (hiinga) and women (nyahanga). However, if one wishes to refer to non-initiated persons specifically then the term kpowesia may be used which means simply 'fools'. Boys are nowadays initiated into the Poroo Society at an early age, often before puberty. Girls, however, continue to be initiated after puberty when they are in their middle or late teens. The concluding ceremonies of the female initiation are also part of the marriage process. Girls on initiation become nyahanga which is also the kinship category 'wives'.

Further differentiation by age is restricted to the men who can be distinguished as either kpakuisia (elders) or koonga (young men). This distinction is particularly significant in Sewa Mende political economy, the prerogative of men. The elders are important jurally as the repositories of knowledge and hence have the ability to reach authoritative decisions. They are also generally, articulators in the kinship organization of the community while at the same time, as a result of the normal developmental process in their domestic groups, now become less active in the business of exploiting resources of land and labour. The young married men (koonga) on the other hand are involved in expanding domestic groups, both in terms of numbers of persons and amount of resources being exploited. They are thus more often involved in disputes over women and children and rights to cultivation. Also upon them falls the burden of heavy work such as clearing forest for the farms or maintaining village property such as the seme, footbridges and footpaths.

While ndopoisia are technically undifferentiated as regards sex, older boys and girls may be distinguished as hiilopoisia (male-children) and nyahalopoisia (female-children). Youths as one might expect display all the usual characteristics that make their elders shake their heads and wonder what the world is coming to. They are particularly fond of wandering around the land from village to village staying and working with various kinsmen for more or less extended periods. In this region the most popular tour is to visit kinsmen in the upland villages during October and November when the upland rice harvest is underway and food and social life is abundant. In January they return to the riverside villages for the harvest of the swamp rice on the riverain grasslands. During the rains they will move off to the larger towns such as Bonthe, Mattru and Bo. Home is wherever they happen to be at a particular time.

These classes cut across all others and although it is seldom that a chiefdom will mobilize into these groupings it regularly occurs at the level of the village or groups of villages. Thus at a meeting of Gbap villagers the community disposed itself according to the classes described, (Fig. 35). Thus the elders sat together with the Paramount Chief with the women (in fact only some of the older wives) on their right. Facing the elders were the young men (koonga). Outside and excluded were the children (ndopoisia). While the elders remained seated when speaking the men stood up and addressed the meeting (gomee) from the central area. Women never address the meeting but express their views in stage whispers to the elders or by recruiting one of the men to speak on their behalf.

The same arrangement operates, almost continually, at the level

of the domestic group. Thus in the context of production different tasks are allocated to the different categories, or, in consumption when elders eat together out of one pot, men out of another, and women out of a third which they might share with the children.

ndehubla, kinsmen, kindred.

We turn now to a consideration of the classification of people (nunga) according to kinship. From any Ego's point of view all persons can be placed in one of three exclusive categories, viz., ndehubla (kinsmen), mblanga (affines) and hotanga (strangers).

The term ndehubla derives from the root nde, the classificatory kin term referring to all consanguineous kin of the same generation as Ego, usually translated as 'brother' or 'sister'. Ndehubla (lit., 'brother in-people') refers to the class of all cognates real or putative of any sex and generation.¹ There are no formal rules as to the limits of lateral extension beyond which kin are not reckoned as included in Ego's ndehubla. Whether an individual is included or excluded is a resultant of Ego's *mnomotechny*, the content of the personal relationship between Ego and the person and so on.

1. cf. Little, 1951, op. cit., where ndehubla is described as "persons standing in a close blood relationship with each other, mainly on the patrilineal side." (P.101) "In quite common practice, however, use of ndehubla will include not only the speaker's mother within the category, but any of his mother's relatives". (P.108). Hofstra, 1937, op. cit., describes Mende kinship as a "mixture of patrilineal and matrilineal." (P.106).

In effect the Mende concept is congruent with the meaning of the term 'kindred' as established by Freeman in his definitive essay,¹ that is "all of an individual's cognates." The cognatic factor is quite unequivocal but some comment is required on the elements 'all' and 'individual'. Bearing in mind the rider already mentioned, Ego's memory, there is also the question of dead cognates. Such persons are not explicitly included in the category but are classed as ancestors. Ego's ndehubla is, then, made up of living persons. Clearly Ego's ancestors are in a sense his kinsmen but the metamorphic process of death modifies the kinship link and hence Ego's relationship with his ancestors which is rather different from his relationships with living kinsmen. Rather than qualifying the term 'individual' in the definition, it must be emphasised. We have already discussed the distinction in cognatic kinship between Ego focused^S groups and ancestor focused^S groups. In these terms the ndehubla is an Ego focused^S group. It is defined as the kinsmen of some individual and not as the descendants of an ancestor. Analytically the distinction does not rest on the different reference points since Ego may be the ancestor, but on the genealogical modalities of descent and cognation, the former being a particular case of the latter.

The ndehubla has the attributes of a kindred. It is not a discrete group and exists solely through an individual to whom all the persons in the group are related by blood. It has no continuity and with the death of Ego ceases to exist. It cannot then function as a corporate group passing on, say, land to the next generation.²

1. Freeman, op. cit., P.200.

2. Davenport, op. cit., points out that "a personal kindred can become a landowning and land holding group" (P.564) but only with the addition of ad hoc procedural stipulations. This however clearly takes the analysis to a different level and rules out equation with unilineal descent groups.

The function of the ndehubla is, in its mobilisation, essentially contingent upon the crises that Ego will encounter during his life cycle. They may be formal and specific as at his birth, initiation and death or they may be informal and prosaic as when he requires help on his farms, in housebuilding, in litigation and so on. However it is usually on Ego's death that all his kinsmen will assemble. In such an instance the group will approximate to his 'ideal' ndehubla. Otherwise the group that mobilises is usually coterminous with the local descent group and may even include affines and non-kin. The reasons are quite pragmatic. The personnel of any kindred are dispersed over a wide area and hence it is usually somewhat impractical for most of them to assemble for such an affair as the mudding of Ego's house. In such a case the group will be recruited from those around Ego. Nevertheless this is worked out in the idiom of consanguinity, and the members of the working party regardless of their defacto relationship will conspicuously address each other 'nya nde' (my mother/sister). Though the kindred are informed of the birth of Ego, his betrothal and marriage, distant (in the spatial sense) kinsmen do not usually travel for the naming ceremony or for all the procedural stages in a marriage. However on Ego's death most of the kindred will assemble, but again and significantly, not if Ego was an old man or woman.

Death raises the issue of property, specifically the estate of the deceased, and despite the opening remarks relating to the negative character of the ndehubla as a corporate group, it is in the context of the ndehubla that the devolution of certain property takes place. The Sewa Mende say that the kindred assembles (ndehubla ti gomeema) to deal

with the pohanisia, literally the-things-left-behind, the estate of the deceased. There is however one important exception to the-things-left-behind, namely the land. The farmland of the deceased is not classed as pohanisia and hence is not the subject of the deliberations of the kindred.

Initially one might suppose a distinction between movable and immovable property. However there are certain weaknesses in this formulation, both empirically and analytically. Thus among the objects classed as pohanisia are the houses and dwellings of the deceased, palpably immovable in their nature. Secondly, as Goody points out,

most legal writers apply the term property to the rights in objects as distinct from the objects themselves ... It is important for the comparative sociologist to draw a distinction between material objects and property, land and land tenure, women and rights in women.

Hence it becomes somewhat unreal to talk in terms of movable and immovable bundles of rights and obligations. However the phrase appears to have been accepted into general use and we shall persist with it here, bearing in mind that the term property relates to rights and obligations and not to things. What then is the significance of the terms movable and immovable? The basis of this distinction is to be found in the modalities of transference. A distinction between the means of acquiring property and property fails to appreciate that in many cases the modes of transference are an intrinsic part of the bundle of rights and obligations that are labelled property.² Unless they are restored, then it becomes difficult to perceive any significant difference between, in the present context, pohanisia and farmland. Synchronically there is no difference

1. J. Goody, Death, Property and the Ancestors, a study of the Mortuary Customs of the Lodagaa of West Africa, London, 1962, P.285.

2. Goody, ibid., P.291.

in the content, among the Sewa Mende, of a persons³ rights and obligations vis a vis others as regards his house and his farmland. Thus, linguistically, ownership is expressed identically in the two cases, Humpa nda we lo (Humpa owns the house), Humpa nda lomei lo (Humpa owns the land). Diachronically there are considerable and significant differences however, since, in the modalities of transmission the bundles of rights and obligations associated with houses, or pohanisia generally, differ from those associated with the land, ndomei. It shall be seen that the dynamics of the system of land tenure are built into the social system in a way that other properties are not. The latter comprise a residue, appropriately named 'things-left-behind', that have to be overtly and consciously dealt with by the actors. Hence the assembly of the kindred.

Among the kindred, the eldest (toklomoi, literally, the standing before man) takes charge or hold (hou) of the deceased's properties, the pohanisia. If the deceased is an old man then such properties will not amount to much more than personal effects such as clothing, a outlass and other tools. He may also have left some debts and credits and a widow (ponyaha). The toklomoi arranges for the settlement of the debts and the collection of credits and chairs the discussion of the distribution of the various objects. Usually they will devolve upon the household in which the deceased has been living during the latter part of his life. On the other hand if the dead man was middle aged, it is likely that he also left fields of rice and cassava, a number of wives and children, food in store, dwellings and so on. Again all are taken over by the toklomoi but the eventual devolution of the properties may involve a long and protracted discussion (njepe, also meaning a dispute) among the kindred. However,

in any event, no immediate devolution will take place. The widows and children and other dependants of the deceased have a right to the food in the store and the standing crops and they will not disperse until the latter have been harvested. From among the kindred an individual will emerge, which could be the toklomoi himself, and assumes the household and other responsibilities of the deceased, merging his own household with the deceased's. Whether this arrangement becomes permanent or not depends on a number of factors, notably the willingness of the wives to be inherited by the particular individual in question and the general agreement of the kindred to his successor. Otherwise the household will dissolve with the wives and their children moving out with their shares of the crops. Beyond such skeletal considerations it is difficult to generalise further since, as is apparent, each occasion will be dealt with pragmatically according to particular features of the case.

The procedure described and the role of the ndehubla is what might be called the traditional mode. By this I do not mean that it is now in abeyance. It is quite common for sons to inherit their father's possessions and this is usually the answer that is given to one's initial enquiries. However, it is later explained that this rule was laid down by the Administration which has now confused affairs because sons now claim their deceased fathers' possessions according to this ruling while the toklomoi and the deceased's brothers may look to the customary or traditional mode. It can be seen that the two methods are not mutually exclusive since the son, as a member of his father's ndehubla, is a possible candidate for the deceased's possessions. In such a case however a degree of dispersal of the household will follow since a son could not

inherit his mother and his father's co-wives.

The ndehubla is also functional as a category, rather than as a group as in the case of inheritance, in the context of marriage and affinity. The ndehubla describes a category of people whom Ego cannot marry. That is, a man and a woman who can trace a consanguineous kinship link between each other cannot marry. This statement requires some elaboration. Firstly a distinction must be recognised between specific injunctions against sexual intercourse between certain categories of kin and a constellation of proscriptions which in their implications render the act impossible to perform. However the transgression of either class of injunctions results in simongamei. Simongamei describes a physical affliction or disease that, unless the victims' children are to die, must be treated with an antidote (sawei). Whether the victim is suffering from simongamei or some other more mundane disease which would be treated with hale ('medicine') will depend on the diagnosis of the halemoi (medicine man) or totomoi (diviner, literally, see-see man). The significance of the distinction becomes apparent when it is realized that the class of specific injunctions against sexual intercourse applies only to persons standing in a certain affinal relationship to each other. No such prohibition exists between cognatic kin. However if a man were to share a bed, for example sit on it, with a woman who is his nde ('sister') then both would be affected by simongamei. This coupled with injunctions against sexual intercourse in the bush (ndogboi nyani, spoiling the bush) for which the Paramount Chief (ndo mahei) would demand compensation, and the fact that such an act would be considered highly indecent anywhere else in the village and an infringement of the village laws (kayei), similar to brawling

in public, for which the village chief (ta mahei) would demand compensation, renders intercourse between such cognates virtually impossible. As regards intergenerational intercourse, informants were unable to visualise a situation involving sons and mothers and regarded it as impossible. As regards real fathers and real daughters their opinions were similar though as regards classificatory fathers and daughters some reckoned it possible, as a case of ndejawei.

Since sexual intercourse per se is not ruled out between cognates theoretically it should be possible for such persons to marry. This in fact does occur. Thus, Sewa Mende say that through one's claim on one's mother's brother's wife, he may give one his daughter, a classificatory sister (nde), as a wife, whereupon one's claim to the mother's brother's wife lapses. When marriage does take place between cognates it is regarded as irregular. Such unions are termed ndejawei (nde, 'brother/sister', jawei sexual intercourse, that is, incest). Though irregular such marriages carry no moral stigma but although the spouses are effectively man and wife these terms of address are not used; each continues to address the other by the appropriate cognatic kin term while similarly no affinal links are created and the respective kin of the spouses continue to consider each other as cognates and not as affines.

The ndehubla is a bilateral kindred which is initially dichotomised by Ego into kewomabla (patrilineal kinsmen) and njewomabla (matrilineal kinsmen). In doing so a perceptible change takes place in the significance of the concepts which is evident in the use and context of the terms. For Sewa Mende the terms kewomabla and njewomabla

introduce an element of localization that is absent in the inclusive term ndehubla. Kewomabla and njewomabla commonly refer to two different localities and the associated groups of people.

A person has unequivocal rights to land for cultivation and housebuilding in his father's village and in his mother's village that is in the two villages where each grandfather (mada) resides. In terms of kin his father's village comprises classificatory fathers, mothers and brothers and sisters. His mother's village on the other hand is made of uncles and wives and though there are clearly different relations implied here, there are none at Ego's own generational level where his uncle's children are also his brothers and sisters. While one can say Ego has these rights to the land, claims to ownership involves the exercise of them. The key element in this context is a localised cognatic descent group, a complex of land, people and ancestors called a kulokwei.

kulokwei, localised cognatic descent group
mawe, household

The root of the term kulokwei is the concept kuwui which we discussed previously as a concept of territorial division. A village may comprise two or three kulokwei or it may just be made up of a single kulokwei. The kulokweis are named sections of the village with boundaries between each that are known to all the inhabitants. The ground of each section, the houses and the people inhabiting them and a section of the bush surrounding the village comprise the kulokwei. The name of a kulokwei is derived from some prominent and characteristic topographical feature. These are the explicit and most obvious properties of the

kulokwei and they are all territorial. Nevertheless when people talk about kulokwei they are in fact discussing an aggregate of people who not only reside in a kulokwei but who also claim descent from the founding ancestor who built the first house in this particular locale and farmed the surrounding bush. Now it is important to realise that descent here means cognatic descent and not unilineal descent. But the kulokwei as a group of persons does not comprise all the cognatic descendants of the founding ancestor, it is restricted to those descendants residing on and farming the land of the kulokwei. Consanguineous kinship with the members of a kulokwei and residence alongside them are both necessary and sufficient to claim membership and the concomitant rights. In societies where discrete corporate groups are formed through the restriction of descent by a unilineal principle it is characteristically this factor that receives emphasis. Similarly in the Sewa Mende system it is the restricting factor, in this case a territorial or spatial consideration, that appears dominant while the cognatic aspect appears suppressed as for instance and most obviously in the term kulokwei itself which we have already mentioned.

The founding ancestors cannot usually be identified nor traced genealogically, they are referred to by the generic term ngafanga which also includes ghosts, spirits, demons, goblins and so on. If it is wished to specify ancestors out of this supernatural collection then the term ndobla (land-people) might be used and in this case it refers to both the dead of the kulokwei and the living elders. It is a term that is used in the context of sacrifices to, and invocations of the ancestors, when the integral nature of persons, land and ancestors is most apparent.

Appropriately, corpses were at one time buried in the ground beneath the house and though today it is usual for burials to be effected at the edge of the village, libations to the ancestors take place, as we have seen, at the head of the bed. So called 'cold-water' (njale) is poured onto the earth floor and the deceased invoked by name. Such an ancestor will be a deceased kinsman of the first, second or third ascending generation and the concern of a single household. A kulokwei will comprise several households and approaches to the ancestors of the kulokwei by the latter as a unit are less frequent since it is the households that are engaged in the tasks of winning a livelihood from the land and hence suffer directly from misfortune. The kulokwei as a land holding corporation is in this sense rather passive. The kulokwei ancestors would of course be informed of any major developments such as the building of a new house or the induction of a new member. It is even more rare for the whole village to combine as a unit and sacrifice to the ancestors. This is of course not surprising since as the size of the group involved becomes larger, from household through kulokwei to village authority becomes more diffuse and agreement to give up time, food and money more difficult to achieve from all concerned. It took a major disaster in which most of the village was destroyed by fire to move the people of Gbap to attend to the village ancestors.

When considering the kindred (ndehubla) and the devdution of property we noted that the eldest of the kindred took control of the property until the assembled kindred agreed upon its distribution. In the case of immovables such as farmland, the eldest as a kinsman of the deceased is eligible for membership of the latters kulokwei and hence

the right to farm that land, if he does not do so already as a resident and hence member of the same kulokwei. However, if cultivation on the land ceases when for instance the crops are harvested and the household dissolves the land effectively relapses to the kulokwei. The point is this, that any person in Sewa Mendeland can claim the right to cultivate on the land of any kulokwei to which he can trace cognatic kinship. He holds this right over and against others who cannot claim such kinship. But only when he takes up residence in one of the kulokweis and makes a farm there can he be said to own any land and be considered as part of the kulokwei with a voice in its affairs.

mawe, household

In our analysis of the kulokwei we referred to the constituent households. Like the concept kulokwei, mawe is also spatial in its immediate signification. The root is the word pela or pe meaning a house. However in its implications, like kulokwei, it refers to a compound of territory and people, or to be more accurate a house and the associated local cognatic descent group. Sewa Mende refer to the relationship between kulokwei and mawe in the idiom of kinship: mawesia mia kulokwei gohu lenga (The households are the children of the local descent group).

Superficial examination might lead one to the conclusion that we are here dealing with the phenomenon of fission and fusion characteristic of descent groups in segmentary societies. However unlike minimal and maximal lineages in a segmentary system, mawe and kulokwei refer to qualitatively different orders of phenomenon. Thus it would be quite

misleading to construct a segmentary model in which households combine to form local descent groups which in turn combine to form villages. We have already seen how at the village level the inhabitants of the village act not as members of kulokwei but as citizens of the village and according to groupings based on age and sex. Similarly the elements of the kulokwei are not the mawes but the landholders. That is, the kulokwei comprises a group of persons concerned with the ownership and allocation of land and the mawe a group of persons concerned with the exploitation of the land. In other words there is a distinction made in terms of the function of these groups, a distinction that is expressed in the different terms employed. The mawe is, properly speaking, a 'household' while the kulokwei is, to coin a phrase, a 'land-hold'.

The household head (pemoi) refers to his mawe, or rather the personnel, as nya mabla, 'the people near me'. This conceptualization is again framed in terms of a spatial referent and not in terms of kinship and affinity despite the fact that the mawe could be described in English as a family or extended family. One notes again that it is the restricting factor in the cognatic descent system that receives emphasis. By describing his household as those 'people near him' the household head defines unambiguously the limits of his authority qua household head. The system of kinship and affinity cannot in itself, in view of the widely ramifying kinship links at the empirical level, specify such discrete units unequivocally. However herein lies the very significance of the kinship system as regards the dynamics of the social system.

The household head is the articulator between the household

as the producing and consuming unit and the land holding corporate group, the kulokwei, by virtue of his kinship and spatial links with the ancestors (ngafanga) and hence as a kinsman of the other household heads of the kulokwei. Through kulokwei membership he is able to acquire land for the production of food by and for his household. Herein lies the significance of the informants shrewd analysis that 'the mawes are the children of the kulokweis'. Just as children are dependant on parents as a source of food likewise is the mawe dependant on the kulokwei. However this succinct statement includes several other elements in the relationship between mawe and kulokwei. Thus the present household heads as the descendants of the kulokwei are literally the children of the latter. Secondly the juridically prior nature of the kulokwei as the land holding group in relation to the land using groups is also implied. Finally the mobility of children, especially adolescents who are apt to rove around the land staying with various kinsmen parallels the relative immobility of kulokweis and mobility of mawes. Kulokweis cannot move, they are anchored to the ground, as it were. The mawe as a house and a collectivity of people and semi-permanent buildings can and does move, taking up residence in other kulokweis. This is, of course, a rather infrequent event as regards large households. Such changes of location usually occur early or late in the developmental cycle.

The mobilisation of the mawe is contingent upon the various operations of production, consumption and reproduction and is therefore virtually perpetually explicit since these tasks make up the bulk of everyday life. This feature has several implications as regards the social organization. The functions of the mawe are characteristically more

diverse than the concerns of the kulokwei. Not all the members of the mawe are relevant in the operation of reproduction while similarly the tasks of production and consumption are not always coterminous with the members of the household. Hence the mawe recurrently faces crises of redundancy and shortage. Nevertheless a certain periodicity is discernible in the fluctuating composition, the further analysis of which is the subject of the next chapter. The mawe is thus less immutable than the kulokwei. In more tangible terms, houses may be demolished within one or two generations while the configuration of the land held by the local descent group will remain the same over several generations. Though subject to recurrent change in composition and a relatively short life span as a discrete group, the mawe is nevertheless a very significant element in the economic sphere of Sewa Mende society.

Finally let us briefly discuss the general features of the internal organization of the mawe. It is usual for the household head as manager to delegate the responsibility of those operations other than brushing among his wives. For this purpose the farm will be divided into sections (kuwuisia, sing., kuwui) and allotted to each wife or group of wives. Each will then be responsible for the maintenance of her own section and will make such decisions as to whether it will be necessary to go outside the household for help. It is not uncommon to find a wife proceeding with another task when she has finished weeding or harvesting on her own section while her co-wives may still be occupied on their own sections. The husband meanwhile will share his labour among the sections although he may concentrate some time with a wife who is lagging behind.

Similarly consumption is to a certain extent in the hands of the senior wife. At the end of the rice harvest the household head makes an initial division of the rice into subsistence for his household including himself, seed and rice to sell, pay off debts, loan and so on. The rice for consumption by the household is handed over to the senior wife who thereafter has complete control over its further allocation. She organizes the other wives into a cooking roster while each wife has her own vegetable garden to provide condiments etc.. When the kin of a wife come to stay with the household, that wife will cook for them. The senior wife may refuse a request for more rice if she feels there is insufficient. This applies equally to the husband and household head. He shares with his kinsmen such food as the senior wife presents to him and not what he may ask for.

So far we have only briefly examined and discussed some spatial categories, some kin categories and a composite institution involving also such factors as the supernatural and property. Let us conclude this section by emphasising the main points. In the field I pondered the expositions of persevering informants trying to explain the workings and characteristics of the kulokwei of which the following is typical:

Long ago your ancestors lived and farmed in this village. You arrive and build a house and make a farm and later your younger brothers and perhaps your sister's husband. They will make farms and build houses next to yours. Their children will build houses and make farms also. Now you are the head of a kulokwei.

But the theme throughout the informants statement is one of

locale and residence, building houses and making farms. This is not to be presumed to be gratuitous information but the key restricting factor in the system of cognatic descent which allows the formation of corporate groups, in this case localised cognatic descent groups, kulokwei. Descent and kinship expresses itself explicitly in the Ego focused kindred (ndehubla) which is analytically and empirically distinct from the ancestor focused localised descent group (kulokwei). However little has been said so far about the system of kinship and affinity in detail and it is to a consideration of this field that we turn to now.

While in English we distinguish between 'women' and 'wives' for the Sewa Mende they are all classed as nyahanga, and thus the process of becoming a wife is also that of becoming a woman, or vice versa. The initiation ceremonies of the Sande hale (Sande society) focus almost entirely upon sexuality, the duality of male-female and reproduction. The masculine aspect is implicit throughout, the whole procedure being geared to producing a fertile female for some male. This male to whom the initiate is betrothed appears formally on two occasions during the ceremonies. When the initiates appear out of the bush for the first time during the last round of ceremonies, they go to the Paramount Chief where the future husbands present about £3 called mbele, to the Chief. Secondly, when the initiates are presented as women (Sande nyahangesia) to the community in the final ceremony, the future husband will come forth and present gifts to the initiates, especially to his future wife, and to the sande hale officials (sowisia, sing., sowii). This is called washing (muama) the initiates. After presentation to the community the initiates go to their husbands, so completing a process that may have been

initiated several years before by the parents and kin of the two parties.

Two men may agree that the daughter of one should marry the other or his son. The cognates of both men will have been informed when the future husband ties a band of raphia around the young girl's wrist (geye gula nyahel lo kulo, literally, rope-tie-woman-is-tied). Thereafter the future husband will make sundry gifts to the girl which may extend through buying her clothes to paying for her primary school fees. He will also present gifts to the girl's parents and kinsmen. Before being inducted into the Sande society the rope will be untied (geye fulo). He may take on the full expense of having the girl initiated or he may limit himself to the formal mbele payment, and the provision of clothes (hanjoi gulei) for his bride for the final presentation. When his bride becomes a sande nyaha he will then present to the parents nyahagoi navoi (woman-gift wealth) or a certain proportion of the agreed sum with a promise to pay later. The exact amount will of course be a matter for discussion but fall within the range of £20 to £40. When the nyahagoi navoi is handed over and accepted whether in fact or, for the time being, nominally the woman is now recognised as the man's wife in the sense of privileged sexual access and various rights in personam, the infringement of which by others is regarded as 'trespass' and disrespectful (bagbuama) with the offender liable to being sued for compensation by the husband. Prior to the bride's initiation and the handing over of the bridewealth, the future husband could not sue for adultery and the arrangement, that is the betrothal, could be dissolved unilaterally. Thus in the case of an alleged rape of the girl while she was still in the process of being^{ti} initiated the rapist found himself sued by the Paramount Chief for an offence

against the land, by the sowii for tampering with her initiate and by the parents of the girl. Though her future husband was not disinterested there was no charge he himself could bring against the offender. However the relationship described between the husband and his wife's kin does not formally change when the girl becomes his wife. He will continue to present gifts to his affines both informally and formally as for instance on the death of one of his affines. The relationship is now, however, essentially reciprocal and any prestation should eventually be countered. The Sewa Mende express this relationship between affines in the maxim 'mbala lei yumbu ii kaka yila' (affinal-fowl-is-not-side-one). That is, if your brother-in-law kills a fowl for you, then, when he in turn visits you, you must also present him with a fowl. This brittleness as it were contrasts with the relationships among cognates which are seen as enduring and determined by uncontrollable factors. Affinal relations are seen as man-made and artificial and just as they are created so they can be demolished, as when husband and wife become divorced. The key feature is the returning of the bridewealth. But among the Sewa Mende much more than the bridewealth (nyahagoi navoi) is returned.

The process of divorce is called kolliigbua yepe (iron-pulling-discussion), and in this form is invariably initiated by the wife and her kin. The husband cannot sue for the return of his bridewealth. If he wishes to dissolve the marriage he merely sends his wife out of his household. If for instance his wife is involved in an adulterous relationship the husband can seek redress from the man involved on grounds of adultery or abduction. In such a case as if the parties involved including the woman's kin, agree then the procedure may become one of

kolliigbua since the correspondent might reckon it worth his while to pay the husband the bridewealth and acquire the woman as his own wife rather than paying compensation and acquiring nothing. In any case it is highly unlikely that the woman will be able to raise sufficient monies to refund her bridewealth on her own and she will therefore turn to her own kin for help or to a lover. In the latter case the process of divorce is simultaneously one of marriage. The kolliigbuamoi (iron pulling person, who will either be a kinsman of the bride or her lover or one of the latter's kinsmen) will require the positive assistance of his cognates in raising the money while the husband's cognates will have to agree to the acceptance and return of the bridewealth, and if a third party, the woman's lover, is involved then their respective cognates will have to agree to becoming affines.

At the kolliigbua yepe each party will swear on the other's hale (medicine). The wife's kin will then ask the husband and his kin to list all the gifts presented by them to the wife and her kin, that is themselves. A stone is allocated to each item. If the wife's kin agree that such a gift to such a value was made then the stone is classed as 'stone accepted'. If the item is denied by the wife's kin then it is placed in a pile labelled 'stone denied'. By all gifts is meant quite literally all gifts presented not only during the betrothal and marriage but right up to the time when divorce proceedings were initiated. The wife's kin then counter with the gifts they have presented to the husband and his kin. A stone is removed from the accepted pile for each gift. If the husband and his kin deny the gift then the stone is placed in a second 'denied pile'. When the amount of kollii is established the

kolliighuamoi hands this amount over to the husband. No action is taken over the disputed items immediately. When, however, the medicines (halesia) catch either or both the parties the disputed items are reconsidered and the appropriate restitution made to protect the victims from the fatal effects of the hale.

The important feature is the complete dismantling of all links established through the exchange of the gifts; the parties involved are no longer affines. If the kolliighuamoi is the wife's paramour then simultaneously these links are erected between himself and the woman's kindred.

While most women are in the households of their respective husbands through the process of falegbua (the term describing the method of acquiring a wife through betrothal and from the Sande society which we have discussed above. Literally it translates as 'seedling-pulling', cf. the English term 'deflowering'.) one in four are not (Table 3)¹. They have been acquired by ndevuihuveli (life begging) which simply involves the husband presenting kola (tolo) to her kinsmen and their acceptance. The amount in this case will seldom exceed £4. This is a radically different procedure though the people claim that the resulting affinal relations are the same as those established by the falegbua process, and that they should be respected accordingly. However, two points are noteworthy. Firstly there is no kolliighbua procedure on divorce, the

1. The data is extracted from the kindreds of Gbap household heads. However many of the kinsmen identified in these kindreds are from the upland area and are not confined solely to the riverside. Hence I would claim that the material has general relevance throughout the region.

Marriage type	No. of cases	Percentage
<u>falegbua</u>	118	74%
<u>ndevuihuveli</u>	39	23%
not known	4	3%
	<u>161</u>	<u>100%</u>

Table 3: Marriage type and incidence

Residence	No. of cases	Percentage
Virilocal HPV	94	58%
HF/MV	15	10%
Uxorilocal WPV	26	16%
WF/MV	5	3%
Elsewhere	21*	13%
	<u>161</u>	<u>100%</u>

HPV Husband's parent's village HF/MV Husband's father's
 WPV Wife's parent's village or mother's village if not HPV

*
 emigrants to urban centre 8
 immigrants 7
 neolocal 6
21

Table 4 : Residence and incidence

	<u>falegbua</u>	<u>ndevuihuveli</u>
Virilocal	87	20
Uxorilocal	10	19
	<u>97</u>	<u>39</u>

Table 5: Marriage type and residence

couple merely separate. Secondly ndevuihuveli marriage is somehow reckoned inferior and it is likely that the proportion of such marriages is slightly higher than my figures suggest; very few informants had mother's married by the ndevuihuveli process.

Of the falegbua marriages 90% were followed by virilocal residence while of the ndevuihuveli marriages the distribution is approximately 50% virilocal and 50% uxori-local. (Table 5) In the latter case the contaminating factor is polygamy, wherein second and third wives invariably go to their husband's residence whether the marriage is contracted under falegbua or ndevuihuveli. Examination of individual cases confirms that if the first wife is acquired through ndevuihuveli then the husband will usually move to his wife's parents' village.

It would be misleading to regard uxori-local residence as deviant, the deviance lies in the original marriage contract by ndevuihuveli. To appreciate this it is important to understand the significance of bridewealth in the system of exchanges involved in marriage. We have argued in the previous chapter that the limiting factor as regards the upland or traditional system of cultivation is the availability of adult male manpower for the operation of clearing and brushing the bush. In this situation then the loss of an adult male to the household through uxori-local marriage is quite drastic while conversely the gain to the wife's parental household is considerable. Meanwhile the location of the woman is, in this context, irrelevant since she will not seriously affect the capabilities of production in either group. The Sewa Mende solution to this problem is then, that the son remains in his parental

household while the bridewealth comprising, traditionally iron blades (kolli, hence kolliigbua) among other objects, vital requirements in the operations of brushing, move to the wife's parents' household. Or more cryptically, women who are necessary for reproduction but useless without men are exchanged for iron tools necessary for production but equally useless without men. In this system then, the ndevuihuveli procedure as described has no place.

Let us turn now to consider the wider implications of marriage or rather affinity in the kinship system of the Sewa Mende as a whole.

From the point of view of the male Ego his affinal kinsmen comprise those individuals he classes as, nyaha, mble, njemoi, simoi and mbanyaha. For a female Ego the same terms also apply, plus another, hini. For a male Ego mble refers to male cognates of the same or higher generation of those he calls nyaha. They refer to Ego also as mble. Njemoi refers to the female cognates of a higher generation of those he calls nyaha. Female cognates of the same generation as nyaha are simoi. Cognates of a lower generation of nyaha are addressed as ndui (child) and referred to as such or specified descriptively. Other affines of the cognates of nyaha regardless of sex are mbanyaha which is also the term of address and reference between co-wives. Finally nyaha means wife. This classification recognises three types of female affine and one male category, a feature that can be related in the first instance to proscriptions on marriage.

Sexual relations are prescribed with those women classed as

nyaha and specifically proscribed with those classed simoi. Indeed intercourse with such a woman is regarded as particularly heinous. It is interesting to note that though Ego usually addresses his brother's wife as nyaha and refers to her as such, this woman is more correctly described as simoi nyaha. For while sexual relations are permissible with such a woman this applies only on the death of Ego's brother when Ego is supposed to inherit his wives.

The proscription of intercourse with the class njemoi ('mothers-in-law') is indirect. It is a great insult (bagbua) to appear indecent before one's njemoi. She is held in great respect and one would bring a case demanding compensation from a person who offended one's njemoi or made offensive remarks about her in public. Thus while there is no interdiction on sexual intercourse per se with such a woman it becomes impossible to contemplate the act let alone set about it in the face of these more general norms.

We have already seen in the context of sexual proscriptions among the kindred (ndehubla) how intercourse is rendered impossible through such injunctions as not sharing a bed with a sister.¹ Such acts will cause simongamei an affliction that also occurs if one has intercourse with a woman classed as simoi, one's wife's sister for example. In such transgressions the result is always the affliction of the children of the persons concerned. Children are also affected in a similar way if their mothers transgress another set of injunctions concerning the procedures of converting raw food into a cooked state. They are called kotoi. If a child is afflicted then a diviner will decide whether it is a case of

1. PP. 90-91.

simongamei or kotoi.

Thus sexual relations per se are forbidden only between persons standing in a simoi relationship to each other and a male Ego's simoi is typically his wife's sister. Functionally this has the effect, in a polygamous society, of making a man look elsewhere than in his wife's kindred for further wives. Hence marriage and affinity among the Sewa Mende is of a quite different order from that among, say, the Burma Kachins where one is not only permitted to take wives from one's affines but positively enjoined to do so.

To carry the analysis further we shall now turn to discuss the kinship system in terms of a young (unmarried) male Ego. He will learn to classify those persons of his father's father's generation according to sex as mada (grandfather) and mama (grandmother). His own generation are all nde (brother, sister) regardless of sex. His father's generation is however relatively more complex. Women are generally addressed as yie (mother) and nyaha (wife) and men are addressed as keke (father) or kenya (mother's brother). Mada, mama, and nde are at once terms of address and reference. However, those addressed as keke and yie may be further differentiated by their terms of reference. They are nje, njewii, keke and kekewii. Thus the kinterms that refer to Ego's first ascending generation are nje, keke, njewii, kekewii, kenya and nyaha.

Those referred to as keke (father) include Ego's mother's husband and other possible husbands under the levirate. Nje (mother) comprise those women and their female siblings, who are married to Ego's 'fathers'. Some of these women will be inheritable by the men of that

generation but others will come under the simoi prohibition, namely the MZ and MZH. Those that are relevant to neither the levirate nor the simoi proscription are the FZ, FZH, MB, and MBW. The FZ and FZH is a genuine residual category: terminologically the FZ is referred to as njewii, meaning literally, 'small mother' while the FZH is referred to simply as such, that is, njewii hini, 'small mother's husband'. The MB is labelled kenya and his wife nyaha.

Ego will observe that among this group of his father's generation certain kinship terms are not consistently applied as regards the sex of the person addressed. Thus his father is addressed as mbanyaha (cowife) by his MBW, and his FZ is addressed as hini (husband) by his mother, but his MB and MBW are consistently male and female respectively. Furthermore the MBW is also Ego's wife (nyaha), the prototype woman, while the MB is the only person of that generation who does not address Ego as ndui (child). Ego is addressed as jaagba, (The root jaa means blessing, grace, sacred) by his MB.

The categories of kinship discussed do not of course correspond with any spatial distribution of the persons involved, at least not at an elementary level.

In Ego's local group he distinguishes between males and females of his father's generation as keke and nje respectively. In the ideal situation of falegbua marriage and concomitant patrilocal-virilocal residence the keke will include as well as his father his father's brothers. His father's sisters will be with their husbands in other villages or local

groups. His mother's brother will also be elsewhere, (Fig. 5). There are no category terms for the FZNM and FZHF but are referred to descriptively (njewii hini ngi nje, njewii hini ngi keke). They will however out of respect be addressed as mama and mada respectively. Local group A is peripheral to Ego's interests where he has only one cognate, his FZ, of the ascending generation. However in his own local group, B, and that of his mother, C, he finds indulgent old kinsmen, his mada and mama and it is ⁱⁿ one of these two local groups but most likely his father's, that he will eventually make his farms.

When Ego and his sisters marry several other local groups come into the scheme, namely his wife's parents and his sister's husbands. In both groups he has mble (brothers-in-law and fathers-in-law) and njemoisia (mothers-in-law) but in only one of them has Ego any consanguineal kin, his sister's husbands, where his sister's children live. Thus, though relations with this group are affinal certain members share the same ancestors as Ego. These are his jaagbesia (sing. jaagbe).

Concepts relating to the supernatural

ngafa, spirit

In describing what ngafanga (sing. ngafa) are it might be useful to begin by saying they are not people. We might meanwhile say they are spirits or non-people. Generally ngafanga are not seen, they are invincible and hence it is difficult if not impossible to describe their appearance. Nevertheless their existence is apparent through their works. Thus for example the howei plant (costus afer) is always blossoming in the villages

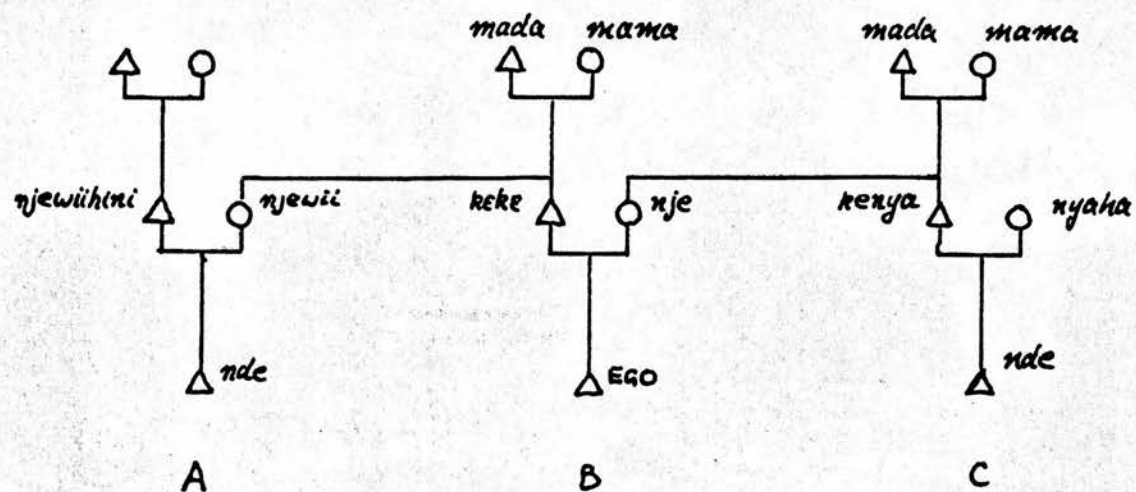


FIG 5 KINSHIP CATEGORIES AND LOCAL GROUPS

despite the fact that people weed their compounds and certainly never plant it. The howei is grown by the ngafanga in order that it may be used in sacrifices to them. Only special people (sampa), people with what we would call second sight, can see a ngafa and communicate with one. If somebody inadvertently sees a ngafa then that person becomes special again, usually by going mad. Ngafanga are sometimes held responsible for bundles of rice that have apparently disappeared. This thieving on the part of the ngafanga can however be curbed by a device comprising a stone placed upon a bundle of rice at the paths leading into and out of the area where the rice is stored. The principle behind the device, as it was explained to me, is that the stone is too heavy for the ngafanga to lift. (But exactly how the device operates I could never ascertain because my informants did not really know themselves. Nevertheless they reckoned it worked and their ignorance otherwise did not prevent them using it. I do not regard this as any more strange than my use of a radio and awareness of a principle of radio waves but utter ignorance of how the apparatus works.) Ngafanga are also responsible for more general and serious misfortunes such as crop failure, flooding, a fire and so on. On the other hand they can prevent such events though it is often taken for granted when it occurs unsolicited. Sewa Mende are, however, quite realistic in their approach to such incidents and the ngafanga and they recognise that there are a number of possible other causes for the disappearance of rice, crop failure and the accumulation of wealth besides the ngafanga.

As we have seen only persons who have undergone some form of metamorphoses and have differentiated themselves from people can communicate

with the ngafanga. Thus, for instance, people in a state of sleep contact the ngafanga. Sleep in Mende is signified by the njii but it is also used in the following contexts. Njii nga lima nga mumbu ngi fe bie : njii I will go I will take it I give to you (when I go I shall give it to you); njii lole bi ya na : njii how many you go there? (how long have you been away?) and taa njii hu : he is in njii (he is asleep). In the first sentence njii may be translated as 'when', in the second as 'nights' (how many nights have you been away) and finally as sleep. As an approximation to the meaning of njii the antonym of the English phrase 'the here and now' is a possibility, in other words 'the there and then'. The ngafanga come to people in sleep (njiihu) through dreams. The diviner (totogbemoi) literally see-see-man, is also able to contact the ngafanga, but only through a medium, and establish the cause of certain events and therefore prescribe a course of action. Finally there is the ndowumoi (literally, under-ground-man), sometimes called kokumoi (termite-mound-man), who deals with the ngafanga directly. The ndowumoi, unlike the sleeping person or the diviner, is restricted, in his ability to deal with the ngafanga, to a certain area. A person can dream of the ngafanga anywhere but the ndowumoi is concerned only with the ngafanga of a specific territory which may include up to three or four villages.

Thus, at a general level, there are the two categories of nunga (people) and ngafanga (non-people). The English terms 'people' and 'non-people' are appropriate in the sense that they are contraries, and not opposites, both being at a different level people. Similarly a person (ni) has, as one of the essential constituents, a ngafa (which we would call a soul or spirit) which manifests itself in a number of ways.

For example when a person suffers from coughing fits, such an occurrence is treated with the application of the ngafo plant, howei mentioned above. The action is similar to our own response of 'Bless you!' when somebody sneezes. A corpse is called pomei, 'left-behind' (by the ngafo).

However there are a number of systematic exceptions to this schema. First of all there is a sub-class of ngafanga that are in fact visible and apparently in contradiction with what we have said so far, they are called ndoli yafanga (dancing ngafanga), of which there are about half a dozen, all of them named. Despite the fact that they are visible, an attribute they do not share with other ngafanga, they are still differentiated from people by other components. Thus only one is able to speak, kongoli, who is also distinguished by a large wooden mask carved in a grossly distorted characterization of a human head and face. On the other hand his speech may be described as that of a basso profundo while the subject matter is invariably riddles and jests. Kongoli, unlike the others does not move around, but remains, while in action, in one place. Nafale, njobai, ngoboi, yomei and yavi do move around each in a particular way or dance. However only yomei has, where the 'head' should be, anything approaching a human physiognomy. Yomei is described as being a particularly fearsome ngafo; for instance, if a dog barks at yomei it is said that the dog will die. Yomei, unlike the others has one left arm in which he carries a whip (fomei).

Despite the rather sinister yomei, these ngafanga are entertainers, or 'thrillers' if you like. A particular ngafanga is usually associated with a particular village. Thus Mojiba is credited with

a very fine nafala: Yile with a wonderful kongoli: Tormagbagbahu with a ngoboi and so on. They will come and add to the festivities and peripheral activities surrounding a village sacrifice to the ancestors or the funeral of a village chief or even without any excuse. There is in most cases much more than a single person dressed up in the appropriate gear. Thus, though nafala is spoken of in the singular there are usually two or three dancing together accompanied by musicians. Similarly ngoboi operates with a number of assistants who perform acrobatic feats and tumbling. Again the proceedings will be accompanied by musicians.

Hale yafanga comprise another subclass of ngafanga that may manifest themselves on occasion. A notable hale yafa is sowii of the sande hale, the principal features of which are the overall black colouring (unlike the ndoli ngafanga which are predominantly red or white or both) and the wooden mask. The mask is carved stylistically to represent feminine beauty. Again sowii cannot speak but can make her intentions known to others through her intermediaries (sowogbla, near-the-sowii). Ganii is a ngafa of the poo hale (Porro Society) and though it can be heard it cannot be seen. Its voice is remarkably like a man moaning down a long wide metal pipe. Another ngafa that can be heard and not seen is nyikesia (cattle), a hale yafa but used for swearing on (sondu).

As we have seen ngafanga also includes the ancestors (klobla) and in this case there is an interesting variation. We have seen how communication with the ngafanga requires some sort of mediation or metamorphoses of the communicator. However when dealing with specific ancestors any person, though it is usually an elder, can talk to them

apparently without any metamorphoses or mediation. But in this instance we find that it is the ngafanga that undergo metamorphoses becoming personified through the use of kin terms and personal terms.

There are also a number of ngafanga distinguished by their habitat. Temuisia are said to inhabit towns, ruins and old farms. They are always spoken of in the plural. Njaloi and tingui are a water variety while ndogboi jusui, as the term implies, is a rather dreadful ngafa inhabiting the bush. Despite their general fearful qualities, ngafanga such as these are also credited with other qualities. Thus temuisia are said to be well versed in pharmaceutical knowledge and healing, njaloi and tingoi can bring wealth to a man while ndogboi jusui might so favour a woman. These associations are apparently casual and chance in their occurrence. In return for the favours bestowed the ngafanga extract from the person some sort of promise or commitment which if broken results not just in the loss of the favour but subjection to extreme poverty or even death. The nature of the compact has important repercussions socially. In the above cases it involves the favoured person only, who commits himself to secrecy over the association. Thus in the case of tingoi the person must never return the ngafa comb to the tingoi despite tempting inducements and must never reveal the association to other people. Now in the case of two other ngafanga known as ndilei and ngulii they bring wealth to a person in return for a solemn commitment to provide the ngafa with human blood.¹ However there is on the other hand no commitment to secrecy which means that the

1. cf. Little, 1951, *op. cit.*, p.231, where ndilei is described as a medicine (hale) and the owner of a ndilei as a witch. This is not the case among the Sewa Mende.

owner of a ndilei can talk about it and even give it to another person. But while being associated with a ndilei or ngulii may bring wealth and influence, it is acquired at the cost of the blood of others, usually that of babies and children and clearly here one's identity as the owner of a ndilei must be maintained in secret from the community otherwise one will suffer banishment if not death, though at the hands of men and not the ngafa. Thus persons in positions of power and wealth are the possible recipients of the favours of certain ngafanga. Now this may be either of the ndilei type or the tingoi variety, and only the latter, for the reasons enunciated, is socially acceptable, but the suspected person can neither deny nor admit to being associated with either. If he claims the favours of a tingoi he necessarily breaks the oath of secrecy in which case if he speaks the truth he will forfeit his wealth and power. If on the other hand he remains powerful then he must have been lying and hence have a ngafa of the ndilei type. Of course no one would normally admit to having a ngafa of the ndilei type unless wishing to commit social or even physical suicide. In fact accusations of ndilei ownership are actionable and the accuser will find himself the subject of litigation by the accused. However, in several conversations I have noted dark suggestions that so-and-so has a ndilei. Inevitably so-and-so is an influential elder, or village chief. Though both ndilei and tingoi can bring wealth, in practice only ndilei is used to account for such phenomenon, while tingoi and njaloi paradoxically, account for poverty. Thus ordinary people often claim that they met a tingoi and were favoured but that later they were foolish and told of the meeting and so are now condemned to a life of poverty.

In a number of ways these concepts concerning specific ngafanga

especially ndilei have parallels in, for example, the Tiv notion of tsav¹ and with what Leach has generalised as "controlled supernatural attack where it denotes a relation of potential authority of attacker over attacked."²

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1. P. Bohannon, Justice and Judgement among the Tiv, Oxford, 1957.
 2. Leach, 1961, op. cit., P.25.

CHAPTER V

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION I : THE DYNAMICS OF DOMESTIC GROUP ORGANIZATION

Having examined the relatively permanent features of the social system, the methods of land use and the social structure, we turn now to the dynamics of the society worked out in the behaviour of persons operating in the social system. Among the most significant contexts in this respect is that which has been variously called the domestic group, the farming household, the family. In this chapter we shall show how the general configurations in the nature of the domestic groups are in fact directly related to the social structure while particular variations are related to the specific system of land use in which the domestic group operates. The domestic group does, however, exist within a more general organizational context, that of the local group and the processes of land tenure, which at once impart certain characteristics to the domestic group and in turn derive their nature from the constituent domestic groups.

The particular relevance of the domestic group lies in the fact that it is the major, if not the only unit of production, and is, therefore, the means by which the various systems of land use are implemented. Two major agricultural syndromes have been identified in the region, the upland syndrome and the swamp rice syndrome, and they have already been described in some detail. The significant quality inherent in both is the essential discontinuity of the producing function. Both systems are characterised by a series of discrete operations often

with marked time intervals between each. Secondly within any one agricultural system the operations require varying amounts and types of labour. To meet these various contingencies the character of the domestic group changes.

However, the continuity of the domestic group is preserved by, among other factors, its function as the unit of consumption which unlike the producing function is continuous and unchanging. In other words people cook and eat food everyday but they are not brushing farms everyday.

One can then for the purposes of organization analysis identify periodic and recurrent changes in the nature and composition of domestic groups that are analytically distinct from similar phenomena associated with what has been termed the developmental cycle. In referring to these annually recurrent changes I shall use the term agricultural cycle. In this chapter we shall be concerned with the analysis of the agricultural cycle of domestic groups among the Sewa Mende.

In view of the number and diversity of operations it might appear that the research methods required to cover them and gather the relevant data would be so unwieldy as to be unworkable. To a certain extent this is a problem but in fact is more apparent than real. In practice the domestic group is flexible enough to deal with a series of diverse agricultural tasks without major reorganization thus eliminating all operations except the most critical. Secondly the agricultural year is marked by a distinct off season when little or no work is done and when the domestic groups are singularly consuming units. This off season

falls during the rains while the period of most intensive work takes place during the dry season. Thus data on the domestic groups relates to their nature and composition during the wet season (consumption) and during the dry season (production).

The domestic groups are from two villages and one cluster of villages. Of the two villages, Gbap and Mojiba, the former is located on the banks of the Sewa and the latter on the red earth upland several miles to the north of Gbap. Their location is in accord with the agricultural systems to which their inhabitants are committed. In 1967, with one significant exception, none of the Gbap domestic groups were engaged in any of the upland farming syndromes and none of the Mojiba domestic groups were directly involved in swamp rice farming. Directly, because though none of the households actually owned and farmed swamp rice land some of the rice found its way into Mojiba through the participation of certain inhabitants in one of the major farming operations of the riverside villages and domestic groups.

The syndrome of the riverside farmers has already been discussed in some detail where the critical nature of the harvesting operation was identified and where changes in the size and nature of the domestic group as a unit of production were anticipated as it moved into this phase. This annually recurrent process is dealt with systematically and along certain lines which can be illustrated in the analysis of particular domestic groups in Gbap.

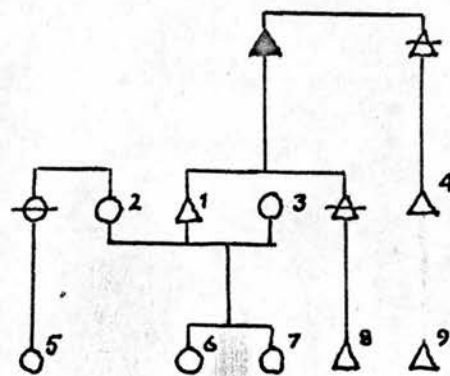
Vandi's domestic group is in no way typical of all Gbap

domestic groups, in terms of its developmental cycle it is approaching maturity and is characteristically rather vigorous, and has indeed been singled out for this reason since its involvement in the social system is correspondingly direct and imbued with vitality.

The predominant concern of the household is its eleven acres of swamp rice land on what is called Gandema site. The plot is some distance from Gbap village and though Vandí and parts of his domestic group return to Gbap every evening to return to the farm in the morning, for convenience he has built a house and kitchen on the levee by his plot of rice. This is not usual for Gbap farmers where swamp rice farms are much closer to the village. Only a few domestic groups at the extremes of Gandema site have resorted to erecting homes on the farms where the domestic groups can live continuously without returning to Gbap. Around his farm house Vandí has the usual smaller cassava and sweet potato gardens.

With the onset of the rains and the rising floodwaters his domestic group moves off the swamp rice farm and resides in Gbap for the duration of the rainy season. During this period the domestic group is not involved in agricultural production being engaged spasmodically in supplementary activities like house repair or construction. Vandí's domestic group is essentially a unit of consumption the composition of which is illustrated in Figure 6.

Jebe is Vandí's senior wife (nyahawa) who has proved to be barren. In view of this her sister has given Jebe one of her daughters,



- ▲ DEAD
- △ NOT PRESENT
- 1 VANDI
- 2 JEBE
- 3 KONA
- 4 SJO ALFREDI
- 5 MUSU
- 6 T3NS
- 7 LUCI
- 8 SJO CHASI
- 9 ABU
- 10 KPANA
- 11 LUSENI

FIG 6 VANDI'S WET SEASON HOUSEHOLD (CONSUMPTION)

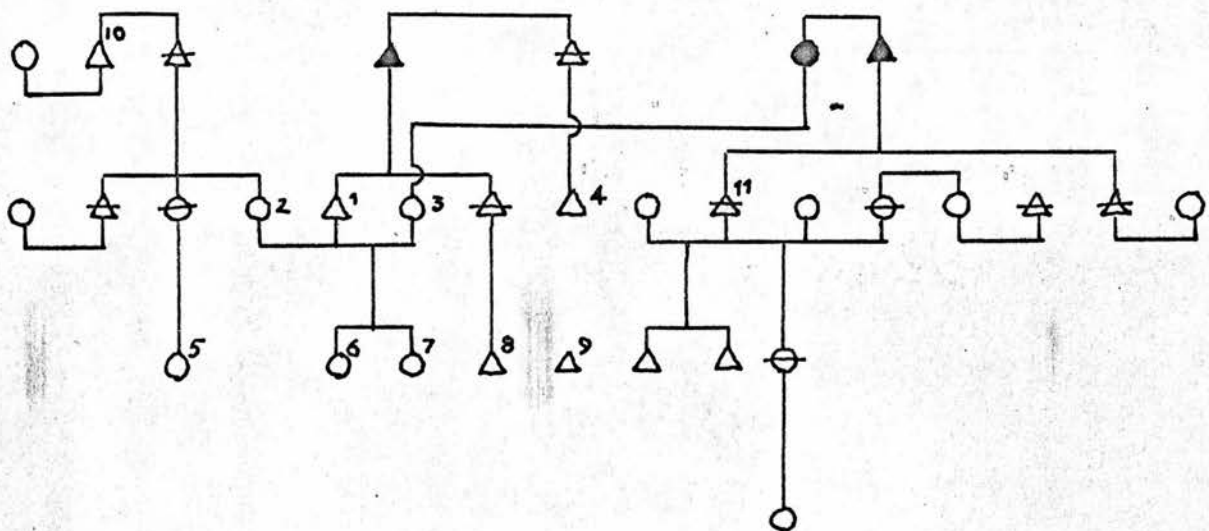


FIG 7 VANDI'S DRY SEASON HOUSEHOLD (PRODUCTION)

Musu, for training (make) and who assumes the role of daughter of Jebe. This mobility of children as regards their effective domestic group and residence is a common characteristic of Sewa Mende society which has the useful effect of evening out the ratio of children among various families which, in view of the high rate of infertility among women, would otherwise be rather extreme. The presence of Vandi's FBS and BS arises from the same considerations. With Jebe barren and Kona having not produced any sons yet, the balance is restored by Soo Chasi and Soo Afredi two youths. In kinship terms Musu, Tene, Luci and Soo Chasi are all "sons/daughters" of Vandi who addresses them all as "nya lui" my son/daughter. Soo Afredi is however, a "brother" and significantly Vandi is unable to exercise the same authority over Soo Afredi as he can over Soo Chasi. Soo Afredi's father is often called upon to speak to his son. Ostensibly Soo Afredi and Soo Chasi are in Vandi's household to learn the skill of woodworking and joinery from Vandi who claims to be a carpenter. Abu, who is unrelated, is also an apprentice.

Vandi has of course a number of domestic and other sources of anxiety and it is illuminating for our purposes to look at one of his most serious problems. His relationship with Kona lacks a degree of conjugal harmony. Kona is the subject of numerous complaints from members of his household and elsewhere who say that she never does any work, is only interested in her daughters and so on. At one point relations between Vandi and Kona became quite strained with Vandi being denied conjugal rights. Nevertheless no separation ever occurred, though in fact it could easily be effected since Vandi had acquired Kona by the ndevuihuveli process. One reason is of course Vandi's desire for a son which Kona

could provide but that is not the only factor in the situation. Kona is from an upland village, unlike Jebe who is from another riverside village several miles down stream. Vandi's dilemma over Kona relates to his concern to preserve this affinal link to an upland village rather than keeping Kona as a wife per se. The significance of this can be seen by considering the composition of Vandi's household during February when the harvesting operation is in full swing (Fig. 7). Thus despite Vandi's strong affective and jural link with Jebe and her kin (Jebe was inherited by Vandi from his late brother who acquired her through the falegbua process), it is Kona's kin that provide the increment in Vandi's household to overcome the producing crisis of harvesting. They are able to do so by virtue of not being involved in the riverside swamp rice syndrome. The upland syndrome has at this time of year a surplus of female labour. Jebe's kinsfolk on the other hand are facing the same situation as her husband's household and are hence unable to make a major contribution. The influx of Kona's kin is a regular and annual feature and in no way an ad hoc group arbitrarily assembled to deal with the harvesting problem. That is not to say, of course, that exactly the same personnel are involved each year. Thus Luseni and his brothers always send some of their wives but they may not be the same ones every year.

If we examine the composition of Vandi's household and in particular the specific changes that occur, several points are noteworthy. First of all the increase in size is accountable for largely in terms of women, the wives of Vandi's male affines, his "brothers-in-law". None of these men have accrued to Vandi's domestic group during its major producing phase. The only possible exception is Vandi's WFB, Kpana.

Kpana and his wife form a domestic group in its last developmental phases. He has no farms of his own and spends his time parasitically, as it were, in either his BD's household or with his B and his movements are on the whole contingent upon the state of his personal relations with the relevant household heads. Absent from the possible sources of cyclical increment are Vandi's cognates. In fact his brother, the father of Soo Chasi, appears during the dry season and the harvesting period for more or less extended stays but they do not have the semi-permanent characteristic that qualifies the other individuals who accrue to the household. Nevertheless his appearance is not without significance as we shall see.

With the completion of harvesting the domestic group contracts as certain members disperse. In Vandi's case his female affines return to their respective villages and domestic groups leaving the basic consuming unit, the point at which we began to describe the cycle. If this contraction continued it would eventually cease when every member of the domestic group dispersed. Such an event does occur with a limited number of domestic groups, if they can be properly so called. Bonbon of Gbap is a case in point, whose household disintegrates as it moves into the largely consuming phase. Bonbon is an old man and has outlived all his several wives, nevertheless, he is to be seen on his farm with his "domestic group" during the dry season. His swamp rice farm is minimal ($1\frac{1}{2}$ acres) and his domestic group comprising two daughters, one of them married, is correspondingly small. During the wet season his married daughter returns to her husband while Bonbon and his other daughter take up residence with his younger sister upstream or with his son living in Bonthe town.

Considering now the Gbap domestic groups generally the particular features of Vandi's domestic group can be seen as instances of a more general trait. The analysis of domestic groups in descriptive kin terms is not only unwieldy for the purposes of generalization but to a large extent irrelevant. The significant components of the kin type FBD, for example, are that the FBD is female and a patrilateral collateral. As we have seen in our analysis of Sewa Mende kin categories the primary distinction in the kinship universe is between cognates (ndehubla) and affines (mblanga). The cognatic class is then further divided into matrilateral cognates (njewomble) and patrilateral cognates (kewomabla). There after the three classes are further broken down according to the kinship terms. For analysis the Mende primary categorizations are used, patrilateral, matrilateral and affinal with the additional refinement of dividing the affinal class into spouses' cognates and cognates' spouses. In these terms then Table 6 shows the total number of persons in all the domestic groups classified according to their particular kin relation to the domestic group head. These figures relate to the wet season consuming state of the domestic groups. Table 7 shows the incidence of adults only as a percentage of the total adults. Children have been excluded from this computation since, as we have seen, they are relatively more mobile than adults and find themselves in various domestic groups according to a number of particular circumstances.

Very generally the figures show that the Gbap domestic groups during the wet season are made up of a man, his several wives and their offspring. There is only one case of brothers comprising with their wives and children an integral domestic group and it is in fact marginal.

	M		S		P		CS		SC		Non-kin	
	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m
Higher generation	3	0			0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Same generation	0	2	2	1	0	0	1	0	55	1	0	0
Lower generation	5	4	30	24	1	3	5	0	3	5	5	7
	8	6	32	25	1	4	6	0	58	6	5	7

30 Households. Average size 6.2 (all persons), 3.3 (adults only).

- M Matrilineals (including sister's children)
 S Siblings and descendants
 P Patrilineals (including brother's children)
 CS Cognates' spouses
 SC Spouses and spouses' cognates

Table 6: Gbap households, totals all categories. Wet season.

	M		S		P		CS		SC		
	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	
Totals	3	2	2	1	0	1	1	0	58	1	69
Percentage	4.5	3	3	1.5	0	1.5	1.5	0	82.5	1.5	100%

Table 7: Composition of Gbap households, adults only. Wet season.
 30 households.

The younger of the brothers has a wife and an infant child and though it could be argued that his family comprises an independent consuming unit it equally has the characteristics of a quasi domestic group similar to Bonbon's described above.

During the dry season the situation changes and the result is presented in Table 8 and presented as a percentage by adults in Table 9. The consuming household of a man, his wives and children undergoes certain modifications as we might expect. The dynamics of this process are expressed in Table 10 which shows the increase in each category as a percentage of the total increase. By far the most important category in this respect is that labelled spouses' female cognates i.e. wives 'sisters' which is not unexpected in view of our analysis of Vandi's domestic group cycle. Some way behind come female cognates on the mother's side and the wives of brothers and sons (cognates' spouses). The immediate sociological question that arises is why these particular categories of people? To answer this question is, of course, the task of this thesis but for the moment we shall proceed with our descriptive analysis of the organization of the domestic groups and, in doing so, it is worthwhile pointing out that these particular categories are most appropriate in organizational terms. The success of the producing function depends on, among other things, efficient management which in turn is related to a systematic allocation of roles and division of labour. It might be expected then that the cyclical influx of various kinsmen could cause a degree of disorganization in this respect. However, in the terminology of the kinship system persons of the same generation as the household head are all either brothers (nde) of various sorts (male or female) or wives (nyaha) of

	M		S		P		CS		SC		Non-kin	
	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m
Higher generation	8	1			0	1	0	0	2	1	0	0
Same generation	0	3	4	4	0	1	5	0	67	2	0	0
Lower generation	5	5	34	28	1	7	8	0	9	10	6	9
	13	9	38	32	1	9	13	0	78	13	6	9

30 Households Average size 8.3 (all persons), 4.3 (adults only).

Table 8: Gbap households, totals all categories. Dry season.

	M		S		P		CS		SC		
	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	
Totals	8	4	4	4	0	2	5	0	69	3	99
Percentage	8.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	0	2.1	5.1	0	69.1	3.1	100%

Table 9: Composition of Gbap households, adults only. Dry season.
30 households.

	M		S		P		CS		SC		
	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	
Totals	5	2	2	3	0	4	4	0	11	2	30
Percentage	16.6	6.6	6.6	10	0	3.3	13.2	0	36.6	6.6	100%

Table 10: Increment in each category in the dry season households,
adults only, Gbap.

various sorts (sexually accessible or sexually inaccessible), a categorization that does not change radically at any stage in the agricultural cycle, with the possible exception of "brothers", while interpersonal relations with the remainder are carried out in generational terms. To take the analysis further, through comparison, we shall now turn to the Mojiba domestic groups.

Luseni of Mojiba's domestic group, as a consuming unit, is made up as diagrammed in Fig. 8 and is generally comparable with Vandi's of Gbap as a unit of consumption. Again like Vandi's his domestic group is, in developmental terms, in the middle stages as can be seen from its three generation composition. Unlike Vandi, Luseni is committed to the upland farming system and has accordingly an upland rice farm and cassava farm as his principal sources of subsistence. For cash he gathers and processes palm fruits producing a considerable surplus which he is able to sell. Finally through affinal links to a riverside swamp rice farming household a considerable quantity of swamp rice supplements his own production. At least two of his wives help to harvest his affine's swamp rice farm every year for two to three weeks. (At the normal rate two women after two weeks work would bring back approximately 9 - 10 bushels of raw husk rice.)

In considering the upland land use system we saw that the critical phase in production was the brushing operation, the annual preparation of new rice farms and the clearing of the previous ^{ones} for cassava. Unlike the corresponding operation in the riverside syndrome, harvesting, which can be tackled by male or female labour, brushing can only be done by adult males. Thus this consideration alone leads us to expect certain differences between Luseni's domestic group and Vandi's when the former

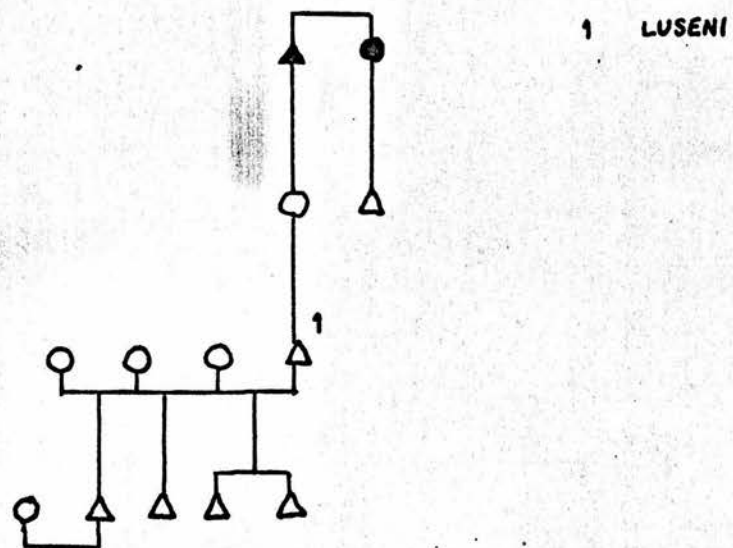


FIG 8 LUSENI'S WET SEASON HOUSEHOLD

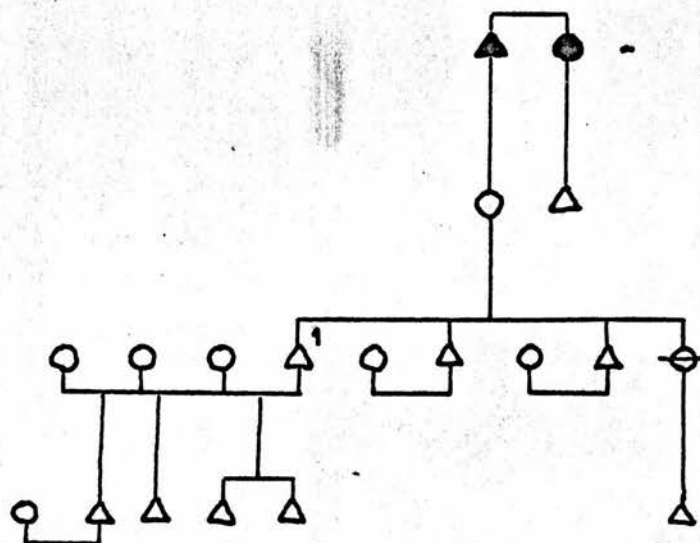


FIG 9 LUSENI'S DRY SEASON HOUSEHOLD

moves into its producing phase. Luseni's domestic group as a unit of production is shown in Figure 9.

The significant feature in the expanded domestic group is the appearance of the male siblings, and their wives, of Luseni. His male affines do not figure in the cyclical increment and if we consider another domestic group in Mojiba and its agricultural cycle we find the same feature but with an interesting variation. The diagram (Fig. 10) shows Sandi's domestic group as a consuming unit and Fig. 11 as a producing unit.

Sandi is an old man, the last of a group of siblings. Massa, his FZD, is senile. Like Luseni and all the other Mojiba households his interests are in upland farming. At one time he farmed a swamp rice farm on Bulom site which he has since abandoned. None of his household go to help at the swamp rice harvest. When his household goes into production he is joined by the sons of his late sisters and together they brush an upland rice farm and cassava farm. Momo and Sumaila also make a separate cassava farm. The form Sandi's producing group takes is clearly somewhat different from Luseni's. Nevertheless, considered at the level of male cognates both Luseni's and Sandi's domestic groups expand and contract within the same kin categories.

Mojiba's domestic group changes cyclically along similar lines when his son becomes part of the producing unit as in diagrams 12 and 13.

Not only does the domestic group in Mojiba show processes of cyclical fission and accretion according to the predominant function of

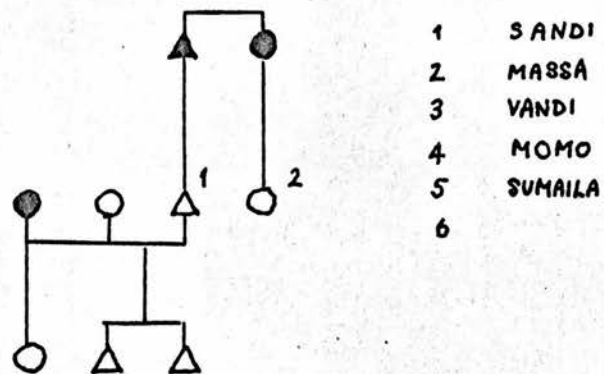


FIG 10 SANDI'S WET SEASON HOUSEHOLD

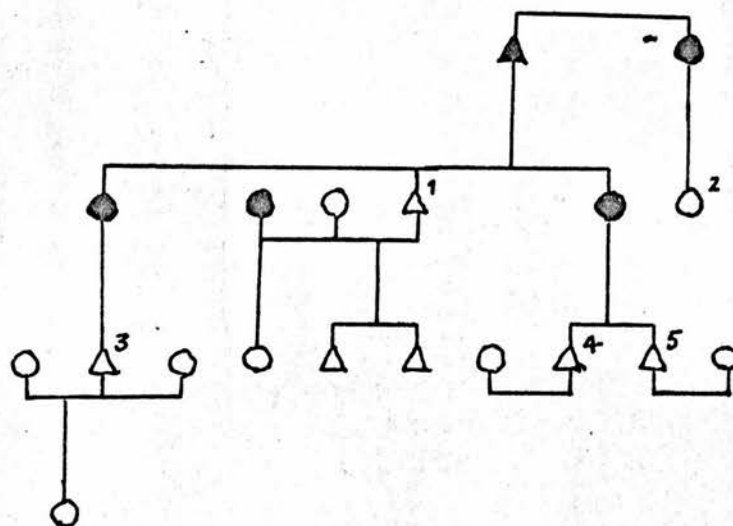
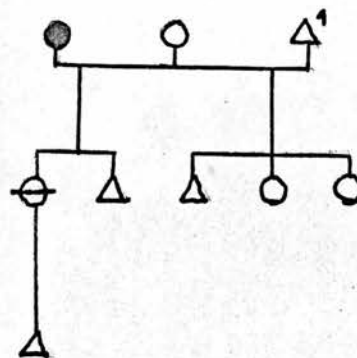


FIG 11 SANDI'S DRY SEASON HOUSEHOLD



1 MJOIBA

FIG 12 MJOIBA'S WET SEASON HOUSEHOLD

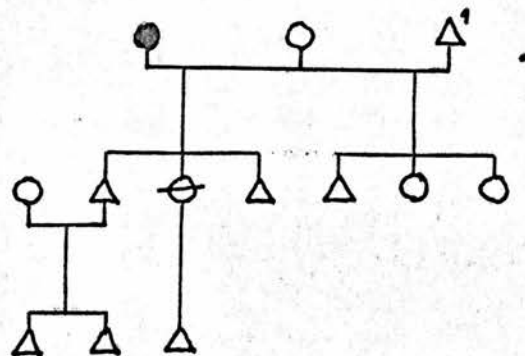


FIG 13 MJOIBA'S DRY SEASON HOUSEHOLD

consumption and production along male cognatic lines unlike Gbap, it also differs in that the personnel that accrue to the households are all resident in Mojiba permanently. In other words taking Mojiba village as a unit there is no annual change in its overall size. Internally, however, there is a recurrent regrouping of households along certain definite lines. If Mojiba is analyzed in terms of consuming units there are fourteen such groups, all of them nuclear families. In terms of production there are seven. In Gbap there are as many producing units as consuming units wherein the cyclical increase in domestic group size is accounted for by a net influx of personnel from elsewhere.

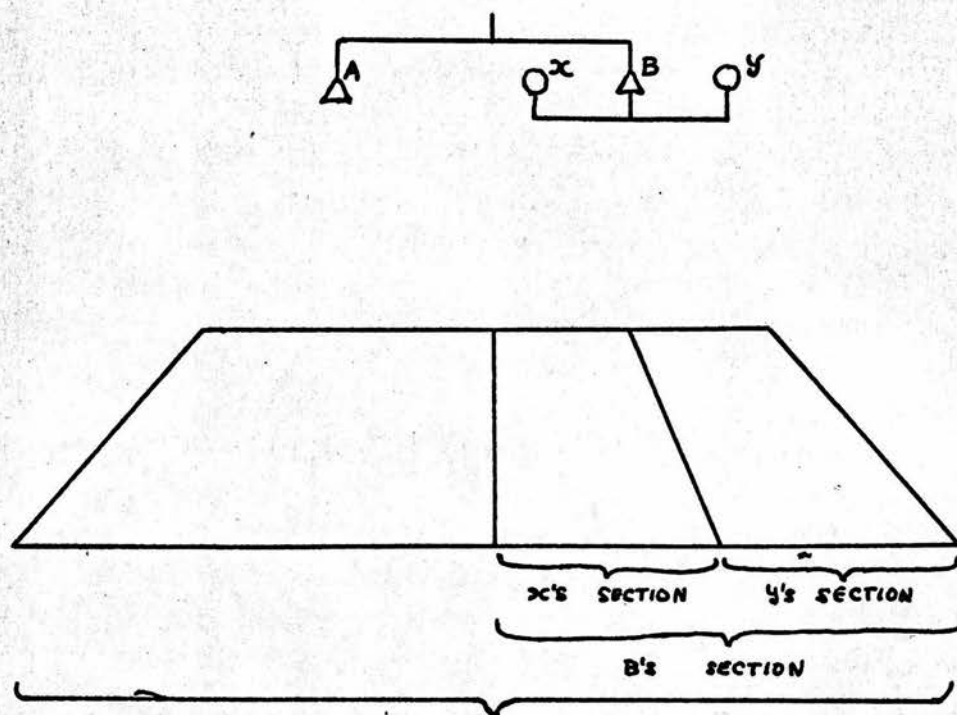
Congruent with these processes on the human level is the distribution of the product at that level. When the riverside domestic groups contract and the various persons disperse to consuming units there is a corresponding dispersal of the product, in this case harvested rice. In Mojiba the contraction of the domestic groups is not accompanied by dispersal of the product in exactly the same way. One cannot remove a piece of brushed bush as one can a sack of rice. Nevertheless, distribution of the product does occur in an analagous way.

Sandi's household is a producing unit made up of four consuming units, a feature which is reflected in the organization of the farms. Each year an integral upland rice farm is brushed and throughout the successive operations involved the household works as a unit. However, the distribution of the final product, harvested rice, does not take place at the end of the cycle so to speak as it does in the riverside situation but as soon as the brushed bush becomes a farm. The initial task in the general

operation of brushing is clearing the undergrowth (nduwe) the completion of this operation produces "brushed bush" (nduwe logboi). Following on nduwe is the felling of the larger trees (kpoi) the completion of which produces a farm (kpa). During this second operation the "brushed bush" is divided among the constituent groups, in this case Sandi, Momo, Sumaila, and Vandi, and certain trees are left standing to mark the boundaries (ndoahu) between these divisions. To the outsider, or observer, these divisions are not readily apparent and the rice farm has all the external appearances of a unitary farm. Sandi, Momo, Sumaila and Vandi each have their own supply of seed rice which each sows on their own portion of the farm though, as in brushing, they will combine in hoeing and harvesting though weeding will be done by their respective wives on their own sections.

The four constituent groups combine similarly in a cassava farm made on the previous year's rice farm. However, Sumaila and Momo combine to produce a separate cassava farm and Vandi has his own inland swamp rice farm. These activities are all reckoned as essentially subsidiary to the main concern though they do express the desire for politico-economic independence.

This division of the rice farm is often taken further to the level of the matricentral cells of the consuming unit, a feature which we have seen in the riverside farming system wherein the rice plot is divided among the farmers' wives. This whole process can be represented schematically as in Figure 14.



THE FARM OF THE BROTHERS A, B.

FIG 14

DIAGRAM OF FARM DIVISION

To return to domestic group organization in terms of kinship and affinity the material from Mojiba village is summarised in Tables 11 and 12 as regards the consuming function. The distribution of all persons shown in Table 11 is as usual largely made up of wives and offspring and in some ways is comparable with the Gbap domestic groups at the same phase in the agricultural cycle. If, however, we compare the domestic group composition in terms of the percentage in each category for adults only, then certain differences between the Gbap and Mojiba households are apparent. In Gbap most of the adults excluding the household head are wives, whereas in Mojiba, though they are still the largest single group, male siblings and their wives are more significant. While as regards similarities, in both villages matrilineals appear more prominent than patrilineal kin in the make up of the domestic group. Nevertheless, during the wet season the differences are slight and become significant only when the composition of the domestic group changes as it moves into production.

The breakdown of the personnel in the Mojiba producing unit is presented in Table 13 and as a percentage of adults only in Table 14. In the regrouping of consuming groups for productive purposes there is first of all the expected increase in average overall size from 5.3 to 10.4 and from 3.3 to 6.4 in terms of adults and this is accompanied by a major change in the percentage composition of the households. Male siblings and lineal descendants are now slightly more prominent than wives. Through our analysis of the upland farming system and the detailed examination of some of the Mojiba households this does not, of course, come unexpectedly. However, the variations in domestic group composition

	M		S		P		CS		SC	
	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m
Higher generation	3	1			0	0	0	0	0	0
Same generation	0	0	0	3	1	0	3	0	19	0
Lower generation	3	2	11	21	0	0	2	0	0	0
	6	3	11	24	1	0	5	0	19	0

14 Households. Average size 5.3 (all persons), 3.3 (adults only).
Table 11: Mojiba households, totals all categories. Wet season.

	M		S		P		CS		SC	
	f	m	f	m	f	P m	f	m	f	m
Totals	3	1	0	5	1	0	5	0	17	0
Percentage	8.8	2.9	0	14.7	2.9	0	14.7	0	55.8	0

Table 12: Composition of Mojiba households, adults only. Wet season.
 14 households.

	M		S		P		CS		SC	
	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m
Higher generation	3	1			0	0	0	0	0	0
Same generation	0	0	0	4	1	0	3	0	10	0
Lower generation	3	8	10	15	0	0	8	0	0	0
	6	9	10	19	1	0	11	0	10	0

7 Households. Average size 10.4 (all persons), 6.4 (adults only).

Table 13: Mojiba households, totals all categories. Dry season

	M		S		P		CS		SC	
	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m
Totals	3	4	0	10	1	0	11	0	10	0
Percentage	7.8	10.3	0	25.3	2.6	0	28.9	0	25.3	0

Table 14: Composition of Mojiba households, adults only. Dry season.
7 households.

	M		S		P		CS		SC	
	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m
Totals	0	3	0	6	0	0	9	0	0	0
Percentages	0	17	0	33	0	0	50	0	0	0

Table 15: Increment in each category in the dry season households,
adults only, Mojiba.

arising out of the different land use systems and the corresponding agricultural cycles is emphatically demonstrated if this characteristic of the Mojiba domestic groups is compared with Gbap households in the wet season. That is if we compare Table 7 with Table 14. It is indeed at first glance difficult to assimilate the fact that the domestic groups of each village are of the same social system. Nevertheless, in comparing these two extreme situations certain similarities are noticeable. In both cases male affines (spouses' male cognates, cognates' male spouses) are virtually absent and matrilateral kin are slightly more prominent than patrilateral kin. The principal differences relate in fact to one feature, the higher incidence of male siblings and lineal descendants in the Mojiba producing units.

Table 15 which shows the increase in each component as a percentage of the total increase in adults of the producing units in Mojiba expresses this feature. The highest increase is in cognates' spouses but they are, however, the wives of the more significant male siblings and descendants and male matrilaterals of the household head who together constitute almost the same proportion, 50%, of all the adults contributing to the increase in household size. Thus the regrouping and concomitant assimilation of households in Mojiba that occurs for production is singularly along cognatic lines. The increase in the adult composition of the household is brought about by the accretion of male siblings and male matrilaterals, who come with their wives, to the household. Again the slight prominence of matrilateral kin over patrilateral kin, a trait that has been seen in all households in all phases, is apparent in this dynamic expression of the cyclical increment.

Finally as regards the agricultural cycle of the Mojiba domestic groups themselves the slight prominence of the cognatic kin categories in the wet season domestic groups which we noted in comparison with the Gbap domestic groups during the same season is now seen as a residue as it were of the domestic group in its producing phase. Though we have again initiated our analysis of the agricultural cycle as a process of increase when the domestic groups move out of the producing phase, that is contracts, exactly the reverse process takes place wherein the household loses personnel in the male cognatic kin categories and the corresponding female affinal category.

Let us turn now to a more systematic comparison of the agricultural cycle of the domestic groups of Mojiba and Gbap with the intention of analysing out and defining the issues that require further explanation. In particular the question that was raised earlier namely why the significance of certain kin categories relative to others?

In our analysis of domestic groups we have considered them at two levels. We have noted the composition of the domestic groups at certain points in time, that is in different stages of the agricultural cycle and we have also computed the changes that take place through the cycle. It is with this latter factor the rate and kind of change that we will concern ourselves here since the explanation of this phenomenon is necessarily prior to an explanation of the particular compositions at particular points in time.

We have already noted the percentage change in the constituent

kin categories of the Gbap and Mojiba domestic groups (Tables 10 and 15). These two tables are reproduced in graph form in Figure 15 for comparative purposes. On the left hand side of the graph are the vernacular terms for the various categories which have been rendered in English on the right hand side. We may characterise the difference between the two cycles in a number of ways. The Mojiba changes are more specific with respect to kin category and sex than the Gbap cycle. Within the latter there are increments, albeit in some cases negligible, in all categories but two, whereas in Mojiba there are seven categories in which no change takes place. In Mojiba the increment in males is without exception in the cognatic category and the females in the affinal. In Gbap there is again no such specificity. Notwithstanding the non specific character of the Gbap cycle the relatively large increment in spouses' cognates (female) is a notable feature and we might summarise the difference between the two cycles as between increments in spouses' cognates (female) and male cognates. That is, between female affines and male cognates, for Gbap and Mojiba respectively.

To explain why the increments occur in these particular categories we must rephrase the question and ask why are there no increments in the other categories? There are basically two sets of factors which are relevant to any explanation and they can be distinguished as ecological and sociological or in Leach's phrase "economics and kinship". Both these systems have been described in some detail in Chapters IV and V. Here we shall show how they constrain actual behaviour.

Considering first the ecological factor, the requirements of

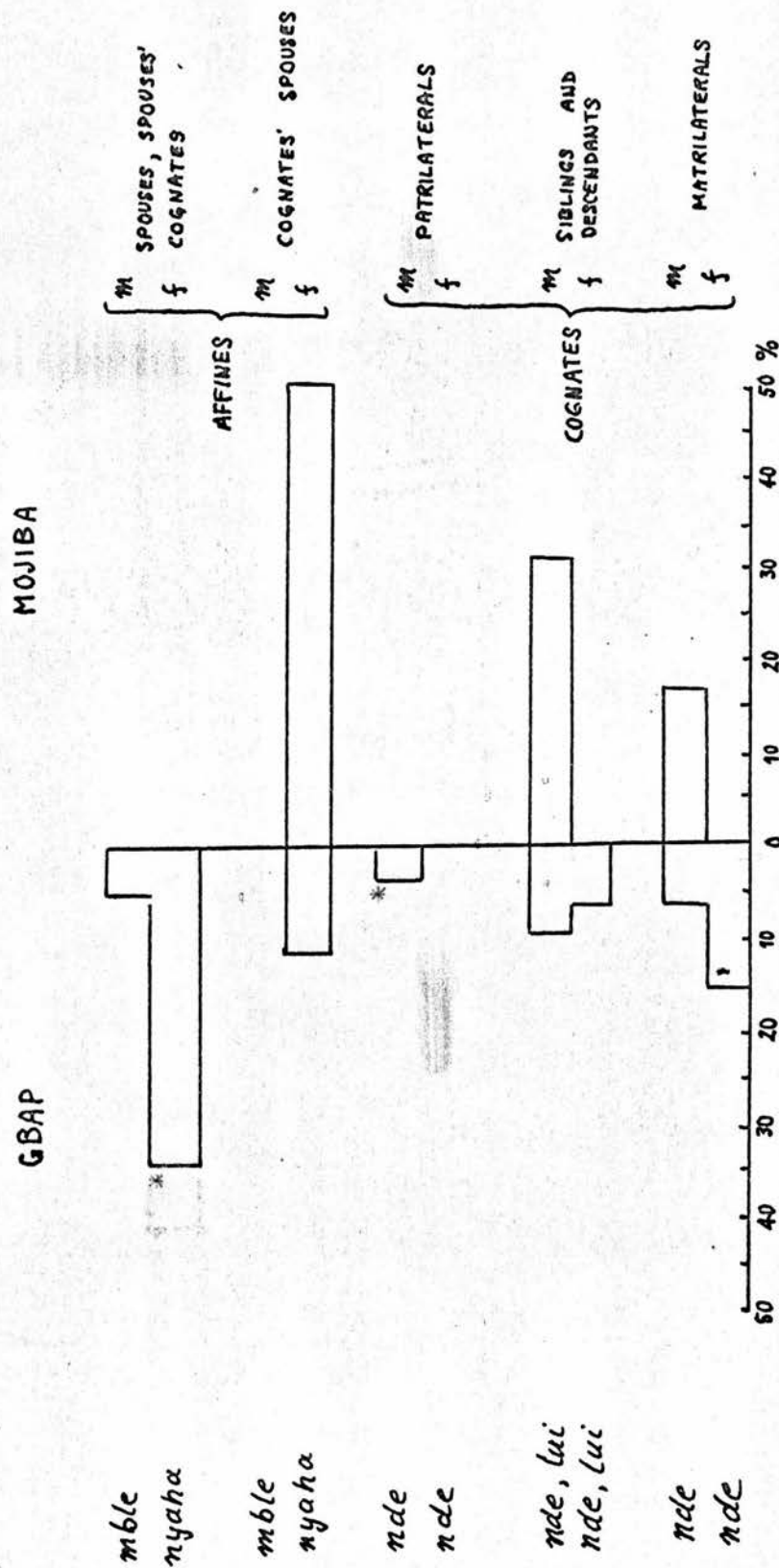


FIG 15 INCREASE IN EACH KIN CATEGORY AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL INCREMENT OF ADULTS, GBAP & MOJIBA RESPECTIVELY

* THESE REPRESENTATIONS ARE NOT AS ACCURATELY DRAWN. THE READER IS REFERRED TO THE APPROPRIATE TABLES IN THE TEXT.

the systems of land use, we have noted that in Gbap the critical operation of harvesting can be done equally effectively by both men and women. In Mojiba on the other hand the brushing operation can only be done by men. In the light of these considerations some aspects of the Gbap and Mojiba agricultural cycles become significant. Thus the absence of female cognates in the Mojiba cycle relative to the incidence of male cognates makes sense in these terms. A female increment alone will not contribute effectively to the producing function of the household. Significantly, as we have already pointed out, the 50% increase in cognates' spouses is entirely due to the male cognatic increment. Females of other kin categories are absent from any cyclical increment. In Gbap, however, the operation does not by its nature select either sex and this is apparent in the increments of both males and females in the cognatic kin categories and certain of the affinal categories.

However, a consideration of the kin categories and requirements of the agricultural operations by no means accounts for the variations. Thus in Mojiba while men only are relevant to the brushing operation male affines are potentially equally effective as male cognates and within the latter class male patrilaterals as effective as male matrilaterals. Nevertheless neither male affines nor male patrilaterals figure in the cyclical increment while in Gbap though both males and females are potential harvesters the percentage increment is by no means evenly distributed. In the Gbap situation there are operating a number of relatively more complex factors.

First of all let us deal with the relatively higher incidence

of female affines, especially spouses' cognates, than female cognates. This arises out of the basic composition of the Gbap domestic groups wherein a plurality of wives is common. In fact there are only eight households in which the household head has only one wife. If then each household head and his wives turn to their respective sisters for help with the harvest then clearly in absolute numbers the wives must in the long run contribute more labour than the husband since each wife, one may assume, has as many sisters as the husband. Hence the relatively higher incidence of spouses' female cognates than Ego's female cognates.

Secondly, again despite the fact that both men and women are potential harvesters, the female contribution to the cyclical increment is more than three times that of the male (76% as against 24%). Here similar factors to those encountered above are in evidence. If we recall Vandi of Gbap's producing household we see that though his wife Kona's kinsmen are the significant source of increment they themselves remain, sending only one or two wives. Vandi's male affines as household heads have their own affairs in the politico-economic field to attend to and while these may be placed in jeopardy ^{if} they left their households for a period of time, this is not the case if only some of the wives leave. However, such a consideration by no means excludes the movement of male adults as the figures show. Male affines constitute 6% of the total increment and male cognates 18%, though as we shall see this difference is itself significant. Let us note meanwhile that the cognatic male increment in Gbap is much less than the corresponding increment in Mojiba, and that the argument relating to the politico-economic interests of these adult men applies equally well to Mojiba as it does to Gbap.

In other words if the relatively low contribution of adult males in the Gbap cycle is partially accounted for by the separate politico-economic interests of these persons, why does not the same appear to apply in Mojiba?

Here we must note two different but related factors: the subtle difference in the nature of the critical producing functions and the differences in the developmental cycle of the domestic groups in Gbap and Mojiba. By paying the appropriate ploughing fee a farmer in Gbap can acquire a rice farm in the riverain grasslands regardless of any labour considerations. Such factors must be taken into account only in the final operation of harvesting the rice. In Mojiba and the upland farming system the critical labour issue emerges at the very initial stage of brushing the bush. Thus the Mojiba farmer must consider and deal with this problem successfully before he can even claim to have a rice farm. Put in another way, if the upland farmer successfully brushes a farm it follows, as a matter of course, that the remaining operations will be completed successfully since the implied female labour can be effectively used in the subsequent tasks. Here the critical point is male labour. In the swamp rice situation since mechanical cultivation has eliminated this problem the establishment of a farm is no longer dependent on these factors. Instead the crisis is shifted as it were to the last stage, harvesting, but in this operation either male or female labour is effective. In the upland syndrome adult males must of necessity combine to make farms while no such consideration applies in the swamp rice zone. The net effect in developmental terms is the occurrence of earlier fission among riverside domestic groups than among upland domestic groups.

That is, if male affines are excluded for various reasons as partners in a farm, then in Mojiba, male cognates must combine in this undertaking while in Gbap male cognates can make farms independently and then look to their wives and affines to enable them to surmount the harvesting problem. In this way then can the lower incidence of male cognates in the Gbap agricultural cycle compared with the Mojiba cycle be accounted for. Exactly the same considerations apply when the relatively low incidence of cognates' spouses, "brother's wives", is examined. Unlike male affines they are more likely to be resident locally and hence engaged in the same farming system. Thus one cannot call upon one's brother and his wives to help harvest since they are facing the same issue. Nevertheless the absence of male affines in the Mojiba cycle is again reflected in the Gbap case where, as we have noted, the cognatic male increment is three times that of the male affinal increment (18% and 6% respectively).

Finally in this comparison something might be said about the matrilateral component. In both the analyses of household composition and now in the cyclical changes the matrilateral component has appeared significantly more predominant than the patrilateral.

Chapter V, the analysis of Sewa Mende structural categories, showed an absence of any unilineal ideology of descent. In fact their notions of "descent" are quite different to those

construed by the English term. Their thinking is notably cognatic and lateral as opposed to unilineal. When considering descent from an ancestor as opposed to an Ego focused reckoning of kindred this took the form of a spatial idiom. However, in the analysis of Sewa Mende kinship classification it appeared that the "mother", her sisters and brothers comprised a distinctive category from that of the father and his siblings. Indeed the constellations of kin terms relating to Ego's parents' generations implied that Ego's relationship to his mother's group comprised a prototype "we group" vis a vis Ego's father and his kin who may be regarded as a "they group". It is tempting to suggest that this structural bias is reflected in the actual grouping of kin as shown in our figures.

It might be useful to summarise and consolidate the comparisons and redefinitions of the key points in this preliminary analysis.

Firstly considerations of the requirements of the upland land use system especially as regards the critical brushing phase account for the absence of female kinsmen and affines, but cannot, however, explain the selection of male cognates rather than male affines since both classes of male are equally effective brushers-of-bush.

The harvesting operation of the riverside swamp rice syndrome

does not in itself specify one type of labour as against another, men and women are both capable harvesters. However, the cyclical increment of the Gbap households show a marked preponderance of women especially wives' sisters. There was also a complementary decrease in the incidence of male cognates and though male affines were not totally absent as in Mojiba they represented only 6% of the cyclical increment as against 18% for male cognates thus reflecting the Mojiba characteristics but clearly contaminated by other factors. The corollary of this low incidence of male cognates is the low incidence of cognates' spouses. Preliminary consideration established that the relatively higher increment of spouses' cognates was, relative to female cognates, the result of polygamy, that the collectivity of wives, have more sisters in toto than the single household head. The relative absence of male cognates was seen as engendered by the nature of the agricultural syndrome and the related processes of earlier domestic group fission in developmental terms. As a result of this, the low incidence of cognates' spouses arose out of the fact that most of them are similarly engaged in harvesting on their husbands' farms.

Nevertheless these factors are essentially particularistic and specific and while they help to account for certain features with these eliminated there still remain certain questions unanswered in the Gbap agricultural cycle. There is then the higher incidence of male cognates over male affines, in Mojiba, to be accounted for. Yet clearly the situation is somewhat different for while there are no male affines in the Mojiba case there are at least some in the Gbap cycle. In considering this aspect, rather superficially, we took into account the separate politico-

economic interests of the Gbap household heads and though this is relevant as we saw in terms of the nature of the land use systems it is only a partial explanation which forced us glibly to assume that male affines can be excluded 'for various reasons'. However, this begging of the question points to the direction of a solution. Instead of asking the rather general question why the higher incidence of Ego's male cognates relative to Ego's male affines we might now rephrase it as why are the politico-economic interests of Ego's male cognates more coincident with Ego's own than are his male affines. We shall turn to this issue in the next chapters where the general trait as well as the specific differences between the upland domestic groups of Mojiba and the riverside domestic groups of Gbap shall be dealt with.

Meanwhile we shall continue with this analysis of domestic group composition and the agricultural cycle and conclude with an analysis of a third set of domestic groups.

As we have seen there were no domestic groups in Mojiba farming swamp rice on the mechanically cultivated riverside sites. Any involvement was indirect and through participation in harvesting alone. There are, however, numerous upland villages where there are one or two domestic groups involved in both upland farming and directly in riverside swamp rice farming. In Mojiba itself Sandi used to have a mechanically cultivated swamp rice farm but significantly enough he has since abandoned it. It is to an analysis of the composition and agricultural cycle of such domestic groups that we now turn.

The particular interest of these households lies in their compound involvement in both syndromes and though a corresponding mixture of the features we have noted for the upland and riverside domestic groups may be expected, the actual composition will in no way be a kind of mean between these two types of organisations. This arises out of the fact that the domestic groups are essentially upland domestic groups who have extended their activities to riverside swamp farming. This implies a fourth possibility namely, riverside domestic groups which have extended their interests to include upland farming. In fact this latter occurrence is a rare phenomenon that will have to be accounted for.

The material presented here relates to a number of domestic groups that carry out their swamp rice farming on the mechanically cultivated grassland known as Batahol site and for convenience we shall label them the Batahol domestic groups to distinguish them from those of Mojiba and Gbap. But it should be remembered that the name Batahol refers to a site and not to a village.

The domestic groups farming on Batahol originate from a number of upland villages. As we shall see the agricultural cycle of these domestic groups differs in many respects from the two types already described but most strikingly in the annual movement of the domestic group after the pattern of a transhumance system. For six months of the year, from July to December, that is during the greater part of the wet season, the Batahol domestic groups are in residence in their respective upland villages. From January to June they are on the riverside where they reside in small nucleated settlements along the river levee. These

villages differ in some respects from the large permanent riverside villages like Gbap and are also unlike the upland villages most notably in their overall size and the size of the dwellings which are generally smaller than those in either the riverside villages or the upland villages. The dwellings themselves, though often immaculate, have a more impermanent character due to the fact they are subject to a certain amount of flooding every year and hence have to be repaired as soon as the families return to them at the end of the wet season.

Nyandehu is one such village on Batahol site comprising four domestic groups. During the wet season the inhabitants are resident at Sembehu village about three miles north. Musa, one of the household heads in Nyandehu, has an upland cassava farm and rice farm as well as his swamp rice plot on Batahol site. His minimal domestic group, that is the consuming unit is made up as in Figure 16 and comprises his mother, five wives and three children. For production his household expands with the accretion of his paternal half-brother and various affines as shown in Figure 17. It is at once apparent if the cyclical changes in Musa's households are compared with Vandí's of Gbap and Luseni's of Mojiba, that as we might expect, features common to both are present. Thus in common with Vandí's some of this increment is made up of female affines, in particular wives' cognates, but unlike Vandí the male cognatic component is also significant in the form of his paternal half brother himself and his domestic group. This aspect is similar, however, to Luseni of Mojiba's producing group. But unlike Musa's none of Luseni's wives' cognates are part of the increment. Also featured in the producing group are Musa's full sister and her children and a female affine of his half

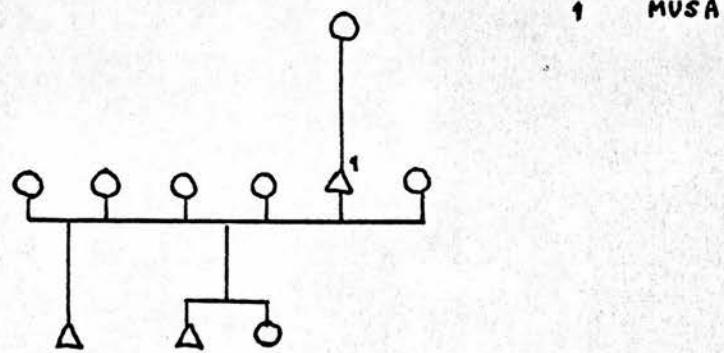


FIG 16 MUSA'S WET SEASON HOUSEHOLD

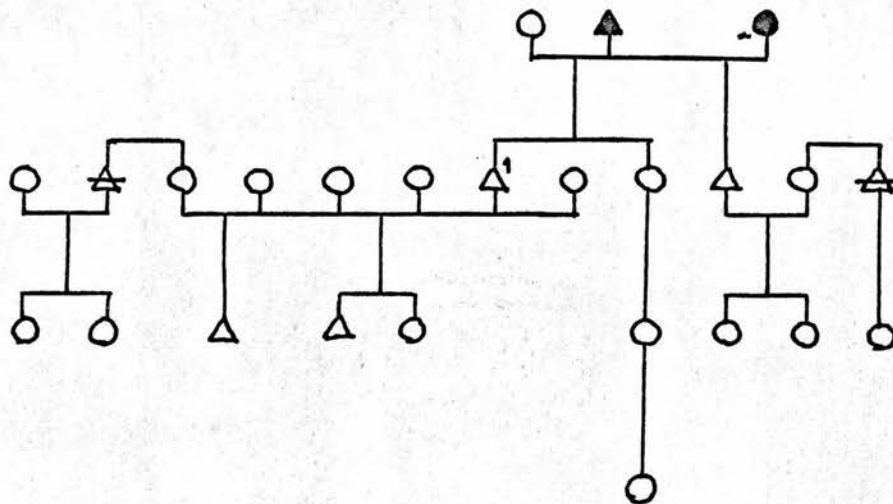


FIG 17 MUSA'S DRY SEASON HOUSEHOLD

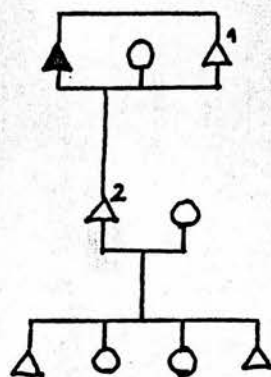
brother, his half brother's wife's brother's daughter. These components we might expect in a riverside domestic group cycle but not in an upland case.

Josia's domestic group also of Nyandehu while not expanding through the accretion of spouses' cognates, the dominant characteristic of riverside swampfarming units, nevertheless shows characteristics in its cycle not to be found in singularly upland domestic groups. Figure 18 shows Josia's basic consuming unit.

As it moves into production its expansion is along cognatic lines but involves female cognates that would not normally be expected in an upland domestic group cycle, (Fig. 19) where over and above the accretion of Dauda and Jo the married daughters of Jibla become part of the producing unit.¹

The data relating to the domestic groups on Batahol site is summarised in Table 16 and shows the total numbers for the consuming function in the usual way. The composition of the households as a percentage of adult only is shown in Table 17. At this stage it is

-
1. Strictly speaking Dauda, Jo and Jibla are his brother's sons' sons and brother's son respectively. However, they are here regarded as his lineal descendants since he can be regarded as the husband of their mother, whom he inherited from his late brother, a viewpoint not dissimilar to that of the people themselves. Furthermore though we have here considered Josia as the household head he himself asserted that he had "given up the post" (ngi gbaha, I have given up) and handed over management to Jibla. (To have accepted this at face value, however, would have done less than justice to his defacto position as 'household head emeritus', as it were).



- 1 JOSIA
- 2 JIBLA
- 3 DAUDA
- 4 JO

FIG 18 JOSIA'S WET SEASON HOUSEHOLD

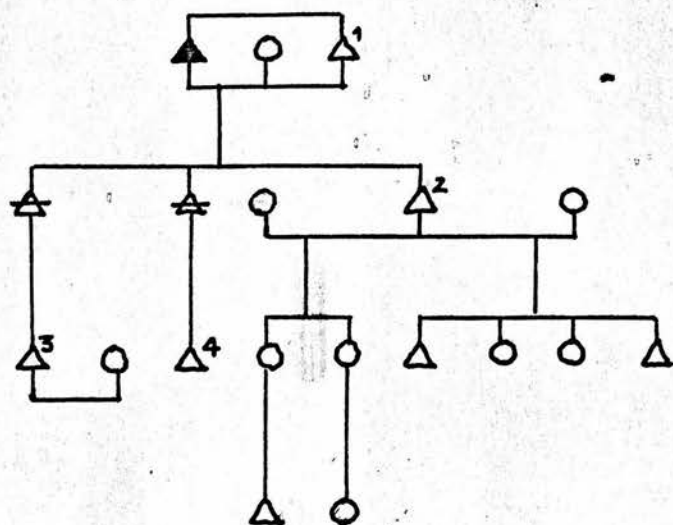


FIG 19 JOSIA'S DRY SEASON HOUSEHOLD

	M		S		P		CS		SC		Non-kin	
	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m
Higher generation	8	0			0	0	1	0	2	1	0	0
Same generation	1	3	1	6	0	2	4	0	68	0	0	0
Lower generation	5	6	29	29	4	5	5	1	1	1	1	2
	14	9	30	35	4	7	10	1	71	2	1	2

29 Households¹ Average size 7.4 (all members), 4.7 (adults only).

Table 16: Batahol households, totals all categories. Wet season.

	M		S		P		CS		SC		
	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	
Totals	9	3	2	11	0	2	10	1	69	1	108
Percentage	8.2	2.7	1.8	10	0	1.8	9.1	0.9	64	0.9	100%

Table 17: Composition of Batahol households, adults only. Wet season.

1. Of the thirty returns one proved unreliable as regards wet season composition and was discarded.

worthwhile identifying certain significant features. As regards composition in general the percentage breakdown of the Batahol domestic groups is much more akin to that of Mojiba than to Gbap. Tables 7, 12 and 17 are reproduced for comparison in Table 18. This is of course not unexpected since the Batahol domestic groups originate in the upland region. What is particularly significant are the differences between the Mojiba and Batahol households and this is particularly apparent in the average size of the domestic groups. If children and adults are included in this reckoning then the Batahol groups show a higher average size than both Mojiba and Gbap. If children are discounted then Batahol domestic groups are still larger than upland and riverside households. Specifically it would appear that household heads on Batahol have more wives than their upland equivalents and in this respect the Mojiba household heads have the least average number of wives.

Bearing these points in mind let us examine now the Batahol groups during production as tabulated in Tables 19 and 20. As producing units the Batahol groups now emerge as being quite distinct from either the Gbap or Mojiba households during the same phase. Tables 9, 14 and 20 are reproduced for comparison in Table 22.

This is especially so in the sibling/lineal descendants, cognates' spouses and spouses' cognates categories. Though again certain categories which have been related to structural elements in the social system common to all three villages appear relatively constant throughout, namely the matrilineal/patrilineal categories and the male component in the two affinal categories.

	M		S		P		CS		SC		
	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	
Mojiba	8.8	2.9	0	14.7	2.9	0	14.7	0	55.8	0	100%
Batahol	8.2	2.7	1.8	10	0	1.8	9.1	0.9	64	0.9	100%
Gbap	4.5	3	3	1.5	0	1.5	1.5	0	82.5	1.5	100%

Table 18: Wet season composition Gbap, Batahol and Mojiba households as a percentage of total adults. (Tables 7, 12 and 17)

	M		S		P		CS		SC		Non-kin	
	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m
Higher generation	10	0			1	0	3	0	6	1	0	0
Same generation	2	3	11	12	0	2	10	0	75	4	0	0
Lower generation	10	9	39	32	4	5	5	2	7	1	4	7
	22	12	50	44	5	7	18	2	88	6	4	7

30 Households. Average size 10.2 (all persons), 6.1 (adults only).

Table 19: Batahol households, totals all categories. Dry season.

	M		S		P		CS		SC		
	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	
Totals	12	3	13	17	0	2	18	2	81	5	153
Percentage	7.8	1.9	8.3	11.1	0	1.3	11.7	1.3	53	3.2	100%

Table 20: Composition of Batahol households, adults only. Dry season.

	M		S		P		CS		SC		
	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	
Totals	3	0	10	6	0	0	7	1	10	4	41
Percentage	7.3	0	24.4	14.6	0	0	17	2.4	24.4	9.7	100%

Table 21: Increment in each category in the dry season households, adults only, Batahol.

	M		S		P		CS		SC		
	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	
Mojiba	7.8	10.3	0	25.3	2.6	0	28.9	0	25.3	0	100%
Batahol	7.8	1.9	8.3	11.1	0	1.3	11.7	1.3	53	3.2	100%
Gbap	8.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	0	2.1	5.1	0	69.1	3.1	100%

Table 22: Dry season composition of Gbap, Batahol and Mojiba households as a percentage of total adults (Tables 9, 14 and 20).

The much larger proliferation of siblings/lineal descendants in the Batahol producing unit as compared to that of Gbap is related to the upland origin of the Batahol households and hence the same considerations that applied in accounting for the difference between Gbap and Mojiba in this respect still apply. What is noticeable is the similarity between Gbap and Batahol in that both display almost equal proportions of male and female components quite unlike Mojiba which is singularly male. This similarity is of course related to the fact that Batahol and Gbap households are faced with the critical task of harvesting swamp rice where women are as equally effective as men.

The pertinent characteristics of those cyclical changes occurring in the Batahol case are shown in Table 21 and Figure 20 as the percentage increase in each category of the total increment of adults where its hybrid nature as a compound of both the Mojiba and Gbap cycles is manifest. Thus like the Gbap households there is an expansion through the accretion of spouses' cognates especially females. However, the resort to this source is not nearly as drastic as that which characterises the Gbap producing households. The reason for this lies in the fact that unlike the Gbap riverside households there is a considerable accretion of male siblings/lineal descendance, characteristic of the upland cycle, where their womenfolk can be effectively used in harvesting thus eliminating the need for spouses' cognates.

Generally speaking the agricultural cycle of the Batahol domestic groups shows the elements of those features characteristic of both Gbap and Mojiba cyclical changes and hence the specific questions to be answered

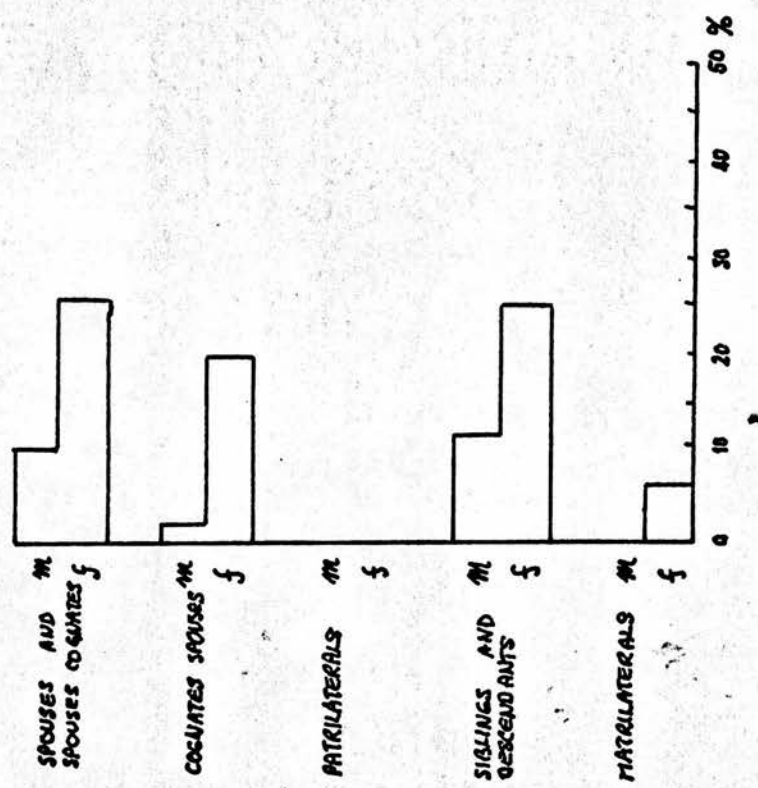


FIG 20 INCREASE IN EACH KIN CATEGORY AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL INCREMENT OF ADULTS, BATTALION

relating to these two apply similarly to the Batahol cycle. We have already seen how certain patterns may be related directly to the social structure and have hinted how others are indirectly related through processes of land tenure. It is in this latter context that the Batahol domestic groups are particularly interesting, specifically, in answer to the question why are only some of the upland domestic groups directly involved in mechanical cultivation as represented in the Batahol households and why are there almost no riverside domestic groups making upland type rice farms? To these problems we shall turn in the next Chapters.

CHAPTER VISOCIAL ORGANIZATION II :KINSHIP, PROPERTY AND DOMESTIC GROUP ORGANIZATION IN THE UPLAND ZONE

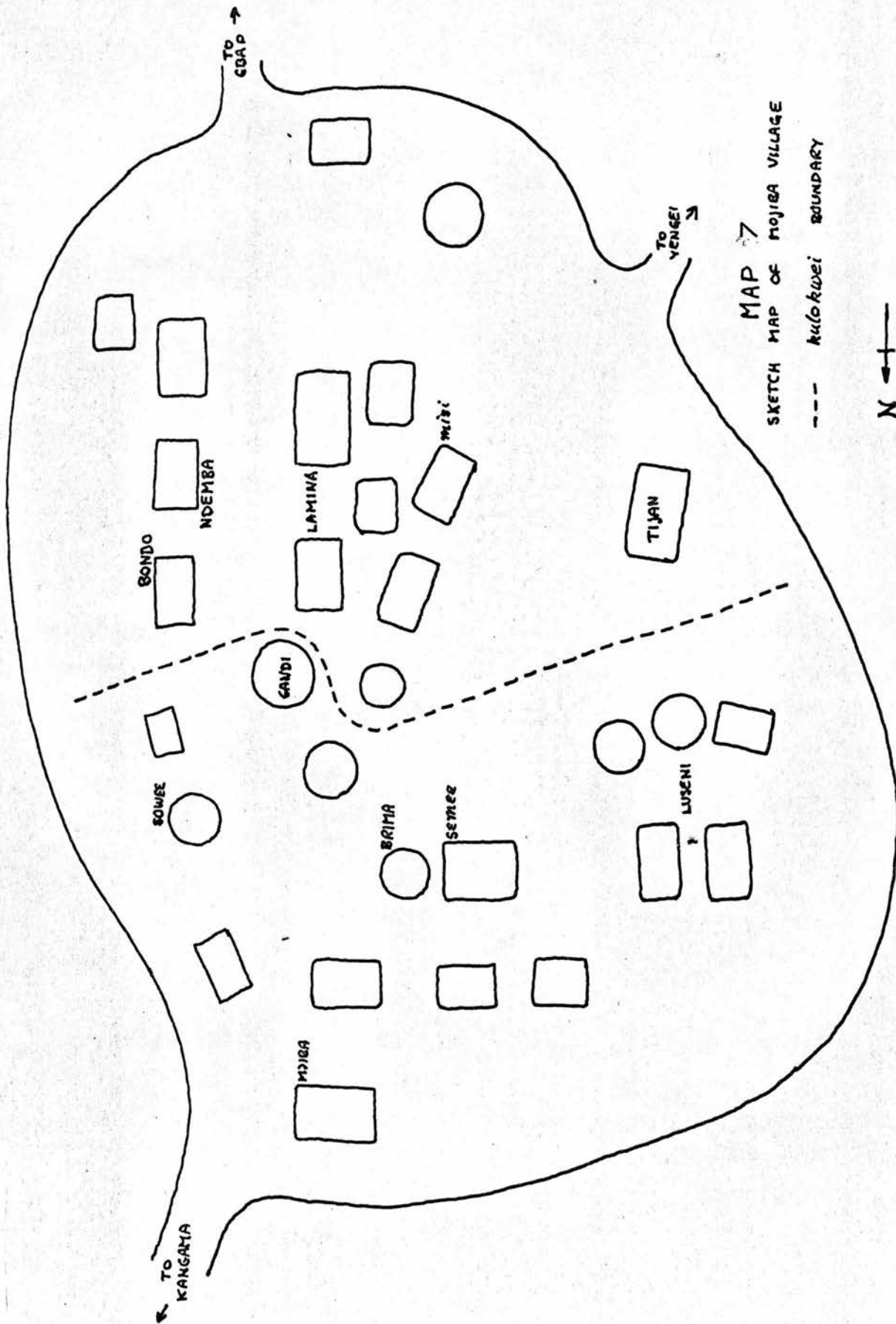
In Chapter IV the general features of the local cognatic descent group (kulokwei) were discussed. We must now turn to some concrete examples and attempt to relate the pattern of domestic group organization to the wider social system.

Mojiba village, as has been pointed out, is located in the northern upland half of the region and its inhabitants are primarily concerned with the upland dry rice farming syndrome already discussed in some detail. The name Mojiba means 'Jiba's Place', Jiba being the name of the founder of the village. None of the present inhabitants can trace exact genealogical links to the founder though they argue that they must be his descendants since they are now living in the village and farming the land. Of more significance is the configuration of kinship links existing among the present inhabitants.

Our analysis of the kulokwei showed it to be a compound of both kinship and spatial or territorial elements. In Mojiba there are two such kulokweis named after the topographical configurations of that section of the village to which they refer. The village is located on a slight rise, the northern half being some feet higher than the southern, this division corresponding to that of the kulokweis. One is called ndembui kulokwei or 'valley kulokwei' and the other ngiiyaya kulokwei or

'highland kulokwei'. The boundary between them is shown in Map 7. Though these kulokweis are especially identified in territorial terms and a boundary drawn between them we shall try to show that this is by no means absolute. Though the locus, so to speak of the ngiiyeva kulokwei will be in the higher part of the village and the locus of the ndembui kulokwei in the lower the actual location of the boundary between them depends on the pattern of kinship existing within the village.

During my stay in Mojiba village I perforce became involved in the micro-social systems of the village not just as observer but also as an actor in the predominant role of 'guest' (hota). This role was played out at varying levels: as the guest of the village, as the guest of each kulokwei and the guest of each domestic group. At each level information was volunteered by inhabitants in order that I could interact efficiently in the social situation. Secondly, as my sojourn progressed I became more deeply involved and hence further information was volunteered or solicited at each level. Finally as anthropologist and observer I was personally concerned not only with such information but also to unearth the actual configuration of elements in each situation, that is the 'last analysis' position. In other words during my stay in Mojiba I synthesised several coherent pictures of the social situation each becoming more complex than the previous. Normally it is customary to present the last as the real or the true position all others being in some way false as a result of the field worker being fobbed off with information to keep him quiet. To subscribe to such a view, it would appear to me, is to cast aside useful and valid data. In the first place there is no reason to believe that the information volunteered initially is not also similar



to that offered to other guests, Sewa Mende or otherwise. In other words such data is sociologically relevant in the analysis of a social situation more general than that of Mojiba villagers and anthropologist. Thirdly, even if interaction and successive redefinition of the situation were particular to the singular case of anthropologist and villagers the internal processes of redefinition are surely generally significant. Lastly, my evidence shows that the villagers themselves do not interact solely on the basis of the actual or real extent situation but in an approximation to it according to the particular context. I would argue that these approximations are not radically different from the different configuration presented to me in the field.

After discussion with the elders and various individuals, together with information from conversations and so on, I was able to formulate a kinship structure for Mojiba village as shown in Figures 21 and 22 and this will be referred to as the first approximation. Let us first identify the various personalities.

Luseni is the village chief (ta mahei) elected by the elders when Lamina retired (gbaha) from the position as a result of old age. Though there is no formal institution of 'elder' comparable to village chief, Moiba, Brima, Lamina and Tijan are generally considered to form the village elders (kpakuisia) among whom village policy is formulated and decisions made to be executed by the village chief, Luseni. Age is not the only criterion of eldership: structural position in the kinship organisation is also considered. Thus Bondo is as old as Lamina, his father's younger brother but as Lamina's classificatory son could not be

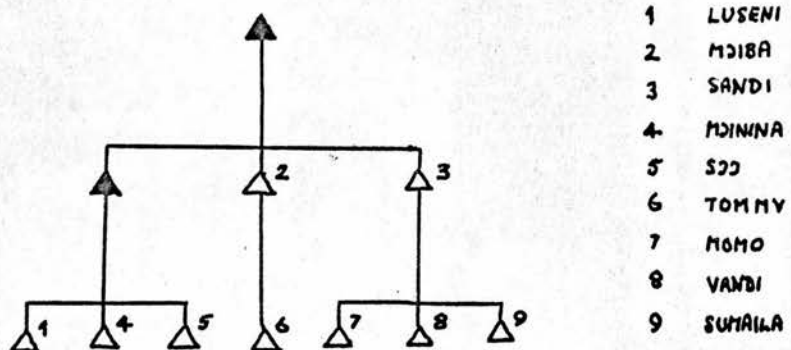


FIG 21 KINSHIP STRUCTURE OF *ngilyeya kulokwei*
(FIRST APPROXIMATION)

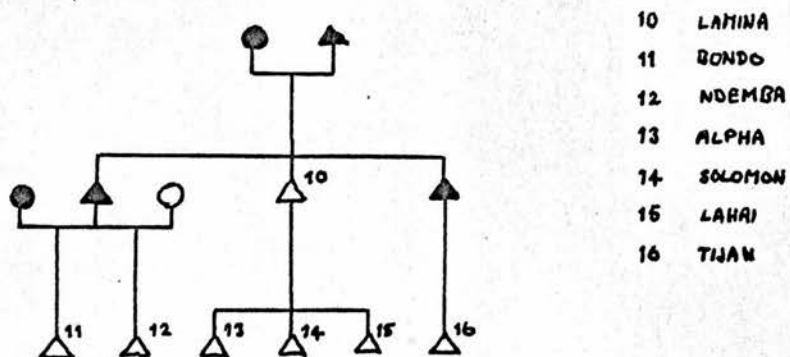


FIG 22 KINSHIP STRUCTURE OF *ndembui kulokwei*
(FIRST APPROXIMATION)

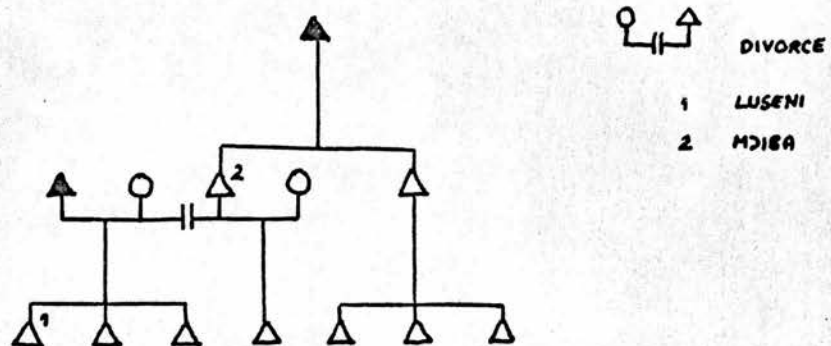


FIG 23 KINSHIP STRUCTURE OF ngilyeya kulokwei
(SECOND APPROXIMATION)

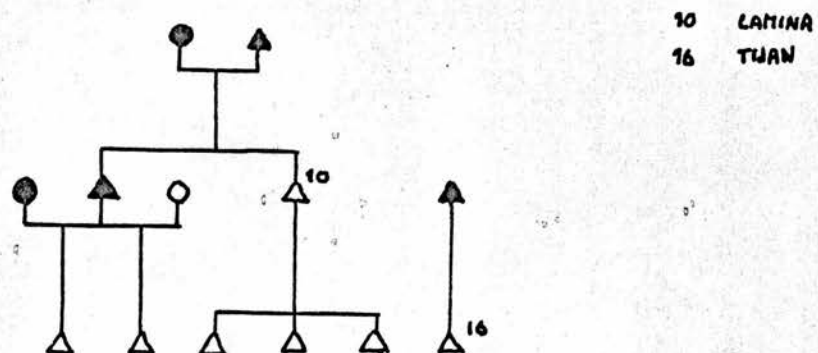


FIG 24 KINSHIP STRUCTURE OF ndembui kulokwei
(SECOND APPROXIMATION)

considered his equal as an elder. The position is similar as regards his paternal half brother Ndemba and not surprisingly then Ndemba and Sumaila are considered as the leaders of the koonga that is the remaining adult men. Tijan, whose relationship to Lamina in this first approximation is controversial in that he considers Lamina as his father while Lamina claims that Tijan is merely the son of his now dead friend, is a Muslim teacher or priest (kamo). Lamina has nominated him as his successor to the leadership of ndembui kulokwei.

As regards the kin structure it can be seen that our analysis of the kulokwei as containing an implicit kinship dimension is confirmed by this empirical case. Mojiba village is split into two local descent groups corresponding to the two kulokwei. There are no cognatic or affinal links between ngiiyeya kulokwei and ndembui kulokwei. Secondly this pattern could be described as patrilineal, Luseni, Moiba, Sandi and the rest are all agnates as are Lamina, Bondo, Ndemba, Alpha etc., of ndembui kulokwei. However, it must be emphasised that this phenomenon is essentially secondary: a derivative from the norm of viri-local residence and marriage by the falegbua process. When Luseni described in the presence of Moiba and Sandi, the composition of his kulokwei he was concerned with residence and not with descent.

During the process of my investigations certain inconsistencies came to light and this resulted in a reorganization of the kinship structure of the kulokweis especially that of Luseni's ngiiyeya kulokwei. As regards ndembui kulokwei it was confirmed that Tijan's father was a stranger to the village and that his kinship link to Lamina is a fiat.

However, Luseni's mother had this to say about ngliyeya kukokwei, "Moiba, Momo and Vandi are brothers. Sandi, Tommy and Summaila are brothers. All six share the same father. Their father has his house in Mojiba. Moiba's wife (the speaker) left Moiba and married Luseni's father, the stranger from Bonta. With her new husband she gave birth to Luseni and Moinina. Now because Moiba's family and Luseni's family have both married the same woman their two families will not marry, if they do this would be simonganei." This statement describes the kinship links pertaining between Moiba, Sandi et al., and Luseni's family and it would appear drastically alters the first approximation. Luseni's link to the rest of his kulokwei is based on the rather tenuous link of his mother being the divorced wife of Moiba and not a clearcut cognatic link as in the initial situation. However, this is to look at the case in terms of English concepts of kinship and marriage which are quite inappropriate to the Sewa Mende context.

Luseni's mother made two points in her explanation. Firstly that Luseni's father and Moiba have shared the same woman, an event that ideally should only occur between brothers since divorce is not recognised at this level but only as a pragmatic device to accommodate incompatible spouses. This point is made explicit by the fact that an incestuous relationship (simonganei) now exists between the kin of Moiba and Luseni, a relationship that would exist if Luseni and Moiba were in fact brothers. In the light of these considerations then Luseni's initial exposition concurred in by Moiba and Sandi is not an arbitrary fiction but a simplification in kinship terms of a more complex relationship which at the same time preserves the structural relations that exist.

A similar process of simplification is present in this very account of Luseni's mother. Moiba, Sandi and the others are all classed as "brothers" (nde) when in fact the genealogical relationships pertaining among them (see 3rd approximation) is much more complex. However, no matter the precise configuration of the kinship links between Sandi, Moiba et al., it would not affect the nature of the relationship pertaining between them and Luseni. In other words a detailed description would contain a vast proportion of redundant information and hence Luseni's mother simplified the relationships without affecting the principal point she was making.

The third approximation (Figure 25) shows the genealogical relationships pertaining among Sandi, Moiba, Momo, Sumaila, Vandi and Tommy. Also introduced at this stage is one Gandi who claims to be a member of ngiiyeya kulokwei but who was never mentioned previously. The obvious feature here is the appearance of a matrilineal mode: Momo, Sumaila and Vandi are the sisters' sons of Sandi and, furthermore, it is Sandi's mother not his father who was a citizen of Mojiba. Finally it emerges that Luseni and Momo have married a pair of sisters. At this stage we are far removed from the first approximation and we must now consider the sociological significance of these different patterns.

First of all it should be noted that though the configuration of kinship links changed in Luseni's kulokwei no corresponding changes took place in Lamina's kulokwei except for the relationship between himself and Tijan. Assuming that I pursued my progressive enquiries in both kulokwei's with equal vigour at all stages it would appear that, at the

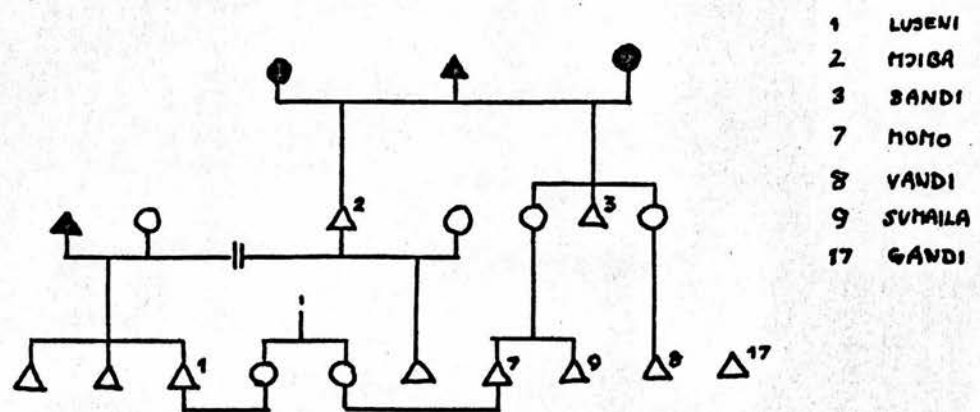


FIG 25 KINSHIP STRUCTURE OF ngilyeya Kulokwei
(THIAD APPROXIMATION)

risk of being banal, the structure of Lamina's kulokwei did not have to change. In other words there was a high degree of correspondence between the ideal pattern and empirical configuration. The structural similarities between ngiiyeya kulokwei and ndembui kulokwei as presented in the first approximation are noteworthy. This quality in ndembui kulokwei results in a monolithic pattern of political behaviour while in Luseni's kulokwei though an effort is made to adhere to the structure as represented in the first approximation the divergences are often exploited and result in factional disputes within the kulokwei.

Thus in Mojiba the village land is divided into three parts: to the north and west is the land farmed by ngiiyeya kulokwei; to the south and west is the land farmed by ndembui kulokwei; to the east there is what is termed the saa logboi to which anyone in the village has access. Now while the members of ndembui kulokwei all recognise Lamina's authority and farm the land under his direction, ngiiyeya kulokwei is split by dispute as regards internal organization. Luseni considers it his right as recognized head of the kulokwei to organise the allocation of farm land, a position disputed by Moiba who argues that though Luseni has been elected village chief and is the kulokweimoi in fact he is a stranger to the village and as such has no right to the land at all. Meanwhile Sandi has taken himself out of the dispute and has acquired farm land elsewhere through a kinsman in another village. Sandi and Moiba it would appear are potential allies against Luseni but such an alliance has failed to materialize for two reasons: firstly Sumaila who forms part of a producing group with Sandi is engaged in a dispute with Moiba about a wife, The woman in question is the widow of Moiba's deceased brother and Sumaila

inherited her on the grounds that as the sister's son of the deceased he never formally renounced his claim to his mother's brother's wife who is also his classificatory wife. The woman is now part of Sumaila's domestic group. Moiba, however, is attempting to claim the woman as his wife by appealing to the fact that he is the brother of the deceased and should therefore inherit his widow. Sandi, however, is reluctant to support Moiba his brother in this case since he would lose a valuable member of his producing group if the woman were to become part of Moiba's household. Secondly, it is not^{at} all clear whether either of the brothers is willing to recognise the other as a possible head of the kulokwei. Though the issue between Moiba and Sumaila is described here as a dispute it should be pointed out that the litigants were not at the time involved in expounding their respective cases before a court. As Moiba pointed out to me, he is waiting for an opportunity to bring the case before the elders, that is, when the elders are willing to hear the case which they are all aware of in fact. We have already seen why Sandi has remained passive and there are obvious reasons why the remaining elders are unwilling to make the case explicit and force an issue. Luseni for instance is aware that any settlement would weaken his position vis a vis Sandi and Moiba within the kulokwei but above all as is realised by all the elders there appears to be no possible settlement agreeable to all parties and hence they are unwilling to compromise their position in the community by being unable to come to a decision or by making a decision that will merely perpetuate the dispute in another form and hence be equally ineffectual.

In hinting at Luseni's strategy of divide and rule, as it were,

it is worth speculating on his position as village chief. I was unable to collect any useful information on the events that led up to his election by the elders as village chief. But it is perhaps not insignificant that he does not combine considerable wealth in both economic and kinship terms. His household in developmental terms is approaching its apogee and hence turnover of production and consumption is relatively high. Much of the surplus from production has been invested in the construction of five buildings and the establishment of palm oil processing equipment, principally a cement tub and a large eighty-eight gallon boiler. Lamina is the only other person in Mojiba with similar equipment. Palm oil (ngulugbo) is prized throughout the country for culinary purposes and its sale is the principal source of cash for all the households in Mojiba. This puts Lamina and Luseni in a strong position economically and politically vis a vis the rest of the village who are forced to rent the equipment from one or the other. Inevitably ndembui kulokwei apply to Lamina for his equipment and ngliyeva kulokwei to Luseni for his. If Luseni's 'exact' structural position in kinship terms is recalled it can be seen that his position as village chief is appropriate. Thus while it is clearly to the good of the village to have a powerful leader to represent them, his position within the village is tempered to a certain degree. A village chief who combines a strong economic position with an equally well based kinship wealth could develop an unhealthy autocratic attitude within the village.

Similarly we can view the relative positions of Gandi and Tijan. Tijan as we have seen has no relationship to Lamina's kulokwei

other than that his father was a resident in Mojiba and that Lamina, who claims to have been a friend of Tijan's father, has adopted Tijan as his putative son. Now again I was unable to gather any worthwhile data on antecedent events but it would be reasonable to assume that Tijan's father was no less a friend of the elders of ngiiyeya kulokwei. In which case the present line up with Tijan the Moslem priest of the village as part of ndembui kulokwei is a political alliance between himself and Lamina: restoring the balance of power between ngiiyeya kulokwei with the village chief in Luseni and ndembui kulokwei with the Moslem priest. Two points are significant in this respect: firstly the semec is situated in ngiiyeya kulokwei and was constructed by the village but largely at Luseni's instigation and cost. The semec is an open-sided building where it is customary for the adult men to congregate in the evening informally and also formally in hearing disputes and formation of policy. It is the domain of the village chief. The misi or mosque, however, is fairly and squarely in ndembui kulokwei and interestingly enough was constructed about the same time. Secondly the position of Tijan's dwelling is on the border between ndembui territory and ngiiyeya territory a site that allows the redrawing of the boundaries to include Tijan's house in either kulokwei without creating any anomalies in the spatial disposition of the members of the respective kulokweis.

In this respect it is worth noting the location of Gandi's house which is similarly placed. Gandi never appeared in the first approximation to the kinship configurations of either kulokwei. Gandi in fact is a stranger who says that he is from Temne country. With no kinship links to any of the inhabitants nor to deceased residents of the

village his position is tenuous in the extreme. Despite the fact that he has been a resident in Mojiba for several years now he continues to describe himself as "Luseni's guest" (hota), farming the land of ngiiyeya kulokwei and associating himself generally with that kulokwei. Nevertheless, it is significant that he is quick to recall that Lamina is his affine (mble), his wife being the full sister of Bondonof ndembui kulokwei. Thus Gandi can be seen to be 'nailing his flag to the fence'. Tijan has quite definitely aligned himself with ndembui kulokwei to the extent that he has become heir apparent to the headship but the fact that one of his wives is a kinsman of Sandi (Sandi is his wife's mother's brother's son) of ngiiyeya kulokwei might be a relic from politically less stable times.

In this description of the internal political relations of Mojiba it has become apparent that the initial division of the village into two kulokweis occurs not only spatially but also in terms of kinship, especially as formulated in the first approximation, and at the level of political economy. Though the village is split in the context of kulokweis it is effectively integrated as a village unit in terms of elders (kpakuisia) and adult men (koonga), who regard themselves as kinsmen (nde) vis a vis other villages. Interpersonal relationships however are managed in terms of a kinship configuration which approximate to the genealogical facts as in Figures 24 and 25. In ndembui kulokwei there is a congruence at all levels, while within ngiiyeya kulokwei there is a variety of kinship patterns that persons may choose to subscribe to according to motives and contexts. It was also noted that as regards inter kulokwei relations no affinal or other kinship links are allowed

to contaminate relationship between the two descent groups. Thus Gandi who is an affine of Lamina is omitted from the first approximation. Similarly Tijan's affinal link to ngiiyeya kulokwei is suppressed and affects only the dyadic relationship between himself and Sandi. It will be recalled that Luseni and Momo of ngiiyeya kulokwei are married to sisters. If Momo and Luseni are classificatory brothers as is ascribed in the first approximation such an event would not be tolerated since it would compromise the ruling regarding simonganei wherein a man is not allowed to have sexual intercourse with his wife's sister. Thus if either Momo or Luseni were to die they could only inherit the other's widow at the risk of simonganei. Hence the relationship between Luseni and Momo resulting from their respective marriages is restricted to them alone in its implications. Often they address each other as 'brother' (nde) but sometimes as 'co-wife' (mbanyaha) if they wish to refer to the fact that they are married to sisters. One might then suggest, if one were to reckon the various approximations of the kinship configuration in terms of validity, that the third approximation which shows all the household heads of ngiiyeya kulokwei related by their exact genealogical links to be the least valid. That is if one wishes to consider ngiiyeya kulokwei as a corporate group then its activities as a unit are more consonant with the first approximation. If however, one is examining the interpersonal relationships and their sociological implications of the various members of the kulokwei, for instance Momo and Luseni, Sandi and Vandí, Moiba and Sandi, etc. then the third approximation is more appropriate.

We must now turn to consider the integration of the domestic groups, as analysed in the previous Chapter, with the organization of the

kulokweis and to take the issues raised there a step further.

Let us examine first of all the situation in Luseni's that is ngliiyeya kulokwei and consider the relationship between the kinship structures as presented in the various approximations as regards the annual fission and fusion of the domestic groups in response to the agricultural cycle. It will be recalled that out of ngliiyeya kulokwei three producing units emerge, Luseni's, Sandi's and Moiba's, ignoring for the moment the rather singular instance of Gandi. Thus for production Luseni is joined by Moinina and Soo, Moiba by Tommy and Sandi by Momo, Vandi and Sumaila. The particular direction that these processes of fusion assume bears little relation on cursory examination to the kinship structure presented in approximations two and three. It is, however, remarkably congruent with the first approximation where the three groups are represented as three brothers and their descendants. The efficacy of this first approximation in relation to other aspects of the kulokwei organisation has already been evidenced. The structural configuration presented in the first approximation takes on its particular form not fortuitously but because it expresses most economically the patterns of empirical behaviour within the kulokwei in terms of the ideals of kulokwei composition and the kinship system. The first approximation at once displays the integral nature of the kulokwei and its division into three mawe.

Considering ndembui kulokwei where the kinship structure approximates almost exactly to the ideal the direction of fission and fusion in the agricultural cycle is predictable. Bondo and Ndemba

combine resources for production into one unit while Lamina and his three sons combine as a second producing unit. Tijan makes up a third producing/consuming unit but is only able to maintain this economic self sufficiency by relying on the help of Lamina's sons.

It is now obvious that the cyclical processes of fission and accretion do not take place across kulokwei boundaries a phenomenon that is implied by the overt absence of kinship links between the kulokweis and that non kin do not figure in the cyclical changes. This point is related to the absence of male affinal kin and the incidence of male cognates in the patterns analysed out in the previous chapter.

At this point the hypothesis that the particular patterns of cyclical change that take place in the upland domestic groups are directly related to the systems of land tenure must be introduced. In this respect two points must be made: firstly rights to land are not inherited as the outcome of death but in the event of a birth and secondly that the significant content of kinship relations is not the genealogical facts they carry but what they say about property, especially land. When Sewa Mende talk kinship they are talking about land tenure: when they talk land tenure they are talking about kinship. However, aphorisms cannot supercede analysis.

When a person is born he automatically acquires a status in an existing configuration of kinship links as a brother, son or nephew and if he has married brother and sisters, also as a brother-in-law (mble), uncle (kenya) or classificatory mother (nje) and classificatory

husband (hini) or wife (nyhaha). At a certain abstract level his structural position will remain unchanged regardless of particular events relating to birth, marriage and death. To a certain extent this is to say no more than that the social system has a continuity independent of the personnel involved. However, it also implies that the relationships as regards land are equally independent of the particular personnel. Thus when a person is born, he is born into a system of property relations in which he has already defined rights. These rights are in no sense bestowed upon him, he does not have to wait until the death of a kinsman to acquire them.

While the kinship system expresses rights to property the kulokwei represents these rights in action. Paralleling the process of converting rights to land into the exercise of these rights there is a change from reckoning in terms of kinship to one in terms of territory reflected in the spatial designation of the concept kulokwei. The cognatic kinship system implies the existence of discrete units of land which become explicitly the units of organization in the exercise of these rights while conversely the system of kinship becomes implicit.

In Mojiba then the dichotomy between rights in land and the exercise of these rights, expressed also in the dichotomy between the kinship system and the localised corporate groups, is related to the particular patterns of social behaviour. The prior nature of rights to land over the exercise of such rights endows each kulokwei with an implicit structure based on the former and expressed in terms of kinship. Hence in relation to the pattern of the annual cyclical changes of the

Mojiba households it can be seen that the absence of male affines and non-kin coupled with the exclusion of non kulokwei members follows almost by definition. If male affines or extra kulokwei kin were to be involved in farming the kulokwei land their structural position would change. By virtue of farming the kulokwei they would be asserting consanguinious ties and kulokwei membership. This would then have to be arranged by fiat. Alternatively the status of hota (guest) would be conferred upon them. In Mojiba when Lamina refers to Tijan to whom he is genealogically unrelated as "my son" and Tijan refers to Lamina as "my father" they are not necessarily being kind or friendly to each other. They are asserting that Tijan is farming ndembui kulokwei land not as a stranger but as a person who has the right to do so. Gandi on the other hand farms land in ngiiyeya kulokwei as a stranger with the permission of the kulokwei. When Luseni refers to Gandi as nya hota (my stranger, guest) he is intimating that Gandi is being allowed the privileges of farming the land, a relationship quite different from that pertaining between Lamina and Tijan. We have seen that Sandi of ngiiyeya kulokwei has taken his activities to the land of a kulokwei of another village. Though he can trace patrilineal kin ties to this kulokwei, which undoubtedly accounts for his going there, he asserts that he farms this land as a stranger. Were he to farm it by the exercise of his rights he would convert his kinship link to one of kulokwei membership, one that would bring concomitant obligations in that kulokwei and village. He might also find, though here my information is unreliable, that his position as a member of ngiiyeya kulokwei in Mojiba might be jeopardised.

Within the kulokwei the detailed direction of fission and accretion in the agricultural cycle is directly related to the kinship structure of the kulokwei as we have already seen. But the pattern of the agricultural cycle is also related to the developmental cycle of the domestic groups, a process we have yet to deal with and one that is particularly relevant to the question of land tenure.

The concept of the developmental cycle of domestic groups stems directly from the work of Fortes,¹ later elaborated in a series of essays edited by Goody,² and is now accepted as one of the most useful analytical tools in current social anthropology and does not, I think, require any exegesis here. However, one or two points must be made before considering the Sewa Mende material.

In the collection of essays mentioned, Stenning's essay on Household Viability among the Pastoral Fulani³ is particularly relevant to this thesis by virtue of the problems it deals with. We have already referred to this work at some length in Chapter I⁴ and we noted that within the Fulani household processes of fission and accretion take place according to events in the human, bovine and ecological components in order to maintain a viable size. Among the Sewa Mende, we are concerned primarily with the human or developmental aspect and the

1. Fortes, 1949, op. cit..
2. Goody, 1958, op. cit..
3. ibid., pp. 53 - 91.
4. pp. 19-21

seasonal or ecological changes which give rise to what we have termed the agricultural cycle. The land of the Sewa Mende, the equivalent of the bovine component of the Fulani household is not significant since, by its very nature, it is not subject to variations to the same extent as cattle. The integration of these cycles within the kinship system is a key process in the devolution of property. In Chapter IV¹ we saw that while death does precipitate a problem of inheritance² the property involved was essentially a residue and we hinted that 'birth' rather than 'death' precipitates the problem of inheritance, in which case the term 'initiates' rather than 'precipitates' might be more appropriate since an infant is relatively ineffectual in politico-jural affairs.

With these considerations in mind let us now turn to the Sewa Mende material, in particular the upland case as exemplified by Mojiba village. If one examines and compares the variation in size among what has been variously referred to as households, units of production or mawe, and these are then compared with the units of consumption or domestic groups it is apparent that there is less variation among the former than among the latter. The variations in the size of the domestic groups is directly related to the processes of the developmental cycle while the relative stability in size of the units of production is related to viability in much the same way as the size of the Fulani household is an optimum within that particular

1. PP. 88-90.

2. Goody, 1958, op. cit., P.57, see also Goody, 1962, op. cit., PP. 328 sqq.

social and ecological situation. Clearly what is happening here is that domestic groups are combining in such a way as to achieve a certain viable size as regards production. Two large domestic groups seldom combine to form a unit of production and similarly two small domestic groups do not combine. In fact fission and accretion in the agricultural cycle takes place among domestic groups at different developmental phases. This process can be depicted as in Figure 26.

The paradigm attempts to show how domestic groups (units of consumption) are integrated as households (units of production). The vertical axis corresponds to an absolute linear time flow while the horizontal axis from left to right represents the biological process of growth, maturation and death of individuals. By compounding the latter with the former the regular elliptical shape that might otherwise represent the development process of the domestic group, becomes skewed. A cross section at any point in time illustrates the composition, in terms of component domestic groups, of a unit of production. Thus considering first the hypothetical case as in cross section A-A, it can be seen to comprise 'x', a domestic group in the last stages of the development cycle, 'y', a domestic group approaching its apogee and 'z' a recently established domestic group. That is the three generation pattern of grandfather, father and son. Cross section B-B represents a household at an earlier point in time (where 'z' has not yet emerged as a domestic group) and 'q' is in the process of expansion while 'p' has not quite reached the last stages.

Superimposed on the paradigm are the actual producing units

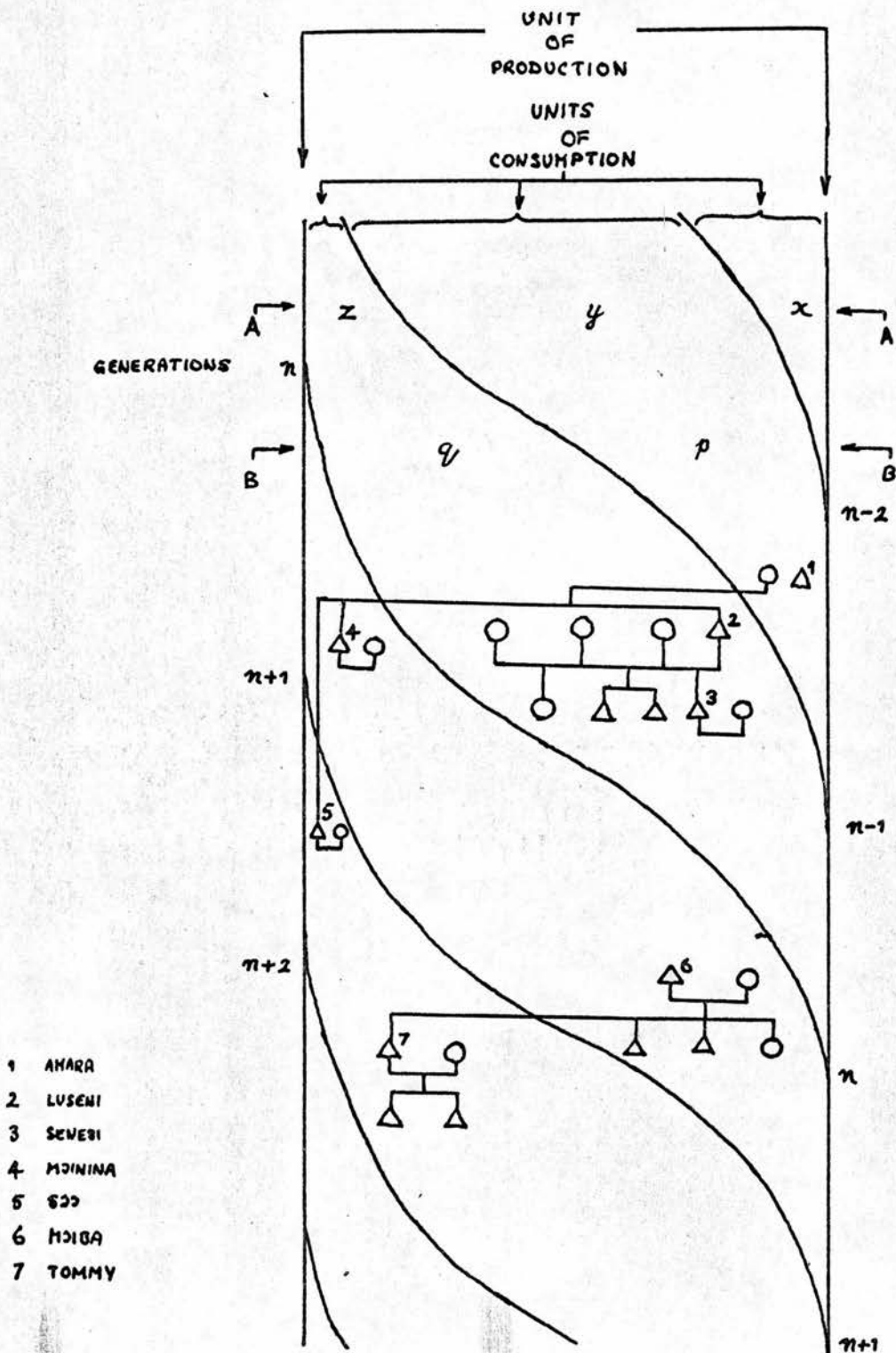


FIG 26 PARADIGM OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL CYCLE IN DOMESTIC GROUPS (UNITS OF CONSUMPTION) AND THEIR INTEGRATION AS UNITS OF PRODUCTION: UPLAND SYNDROME

of Luseni and Moiba which in many ways correspond to the hypothetical cases A and B respectively. Two points should be made, however. In the first place unlike A and B, Luseni's and Moiba's households are in fact separate and existing simultaneously in time. As presented in the diagram they appear as part of the same household at different periods in time. To be formally correct they each should have separate paradigms. Secondly generational differences are not always congruent with the genealogical facts. Thus Luseni and his brothers Moinina and Soo display some disparity in their biological age and hence in the stages of their respective domestic group development. Nevertheless there is a correspondence between the abstract paradigm and the empirical cases.

Luseni's household corresponds to the hypothetical case A. Amara and his classificatory sister, Luseni's mother, represent the last almost indistinguishable stages of the previous domestic group, Luseni's natal family. Meanwhile at the lower end, so to speak, Soo and his recently acquired wife emerge into the first stages of the developmental process as an independant domestic group and unit of consumption. Senesi, though newly married is still considered part of Luseni's domestic group marked by the fact his wife does not yet cook food for him separately and she works under the supervision of her mother-in-law.

Moiba's household is older than Luseni's in developmental terms and approximates to case B. Moiba's own domestic group is in the stages of dissolution and is correspondingly smaller than Luseni's. On the other hand his son Tommy's domestic group is more developed than either Moinina's or Soo's.

It follows then that as regards land use the amount of land under productive use is roughly the same for each producing unit assuming that each household is expending labour at the same rate and with the same degree of skill. Moreover as regards each single household the amount of land under cultivation remains the same regardless of the developmental cycle process of each constituent domestic group, reflected by the paradigm in the constant width of the horizontal dimension which represents the constant size of the household or unit of production. Unfortunately I was unable to survey the farms of the Mojiba households and hence confirm this through empirical evidence.

However it is clear from genealogical data that the continuity of the household suggested by the paradigm is in fact relatively ephemeral. Moiba and Sandi constitute separate households as do Lamina and Bondo yet in the previous generation there was only one in each case, their respective natal households. In other words there does occur definitive fission within households over and above the cyclical fission and accretion resulting from the demands of the agricultural year. The line of ultimate fission will follow the lines of annual cyclical fission. That is, there will come a time when two units of consumption will no longer combine for the function of production. It is significant and noteworthy that the separation of Luseni, Moiba and Sandi in ngiiyeya kulokwei and of Lamina and Bondo in ndembui kulokwei, can be traced back to male siblings either real or putative. What has happened here is that the developmental processes of the respective brothers' domestic groups have been in phase with each other, as one has expanded so has the other,

unlike the paradigmatic process in which each domestic group is out of phase. There the expansion of one is compensated by the simultaneous contraction of another. It is also interesting to note that in Luseni's household which comprises three siblings, that Moinina makes for himself an inland swamp rice farm over and above his participation in the household farms, a feature that may be the initial move towards fission and complete independence later in the developmental cycle of his domestic group. However it does not follow automatically that siblings will separate and establish independent households as the case of Bondo and Ndemba testifies. Here for historical reasons neither of these domestic groups followed the usual pattern of expansion and contraction. Both Bondo and Ndemba have no surviving children and have never had more than one wife each. Ndemba's domestic group is only made complete by the addition of some surplus children of his sister. Neither of the domestic groups has been able to achieve independent viability in production and have hence combined to achieve this.

We have already discussed at some length the distinction between rights to land and the rights that arise through the exercise of them and that the Sewa Mende can claim rights to land where he can show that one of his cognates have farmed. Now it is crucial to realise that Sewa Mende do not argue that they have a right to land because they are able to demonstrate a cognatic link, indeed I doubt if such a formulation could be translated coherently into Mende. That is the kinship system embodies the agrarian system, they are one and the same thing, and hence to claim that one is derived from the other is equivalent to saying that 'that is a cur because it is a dog.' This

identification is of course an inference from Mende culture.

When Sewa Mende address their Paramount Chief they invariably use the kinship term mada which can be rendered as 'grandfather'. Not only is he addressed as such but he is also referred to as such, simply as 'mada', in conversation without specification and qualification. He is the prototype grandfather and hence needs no further detailing to avoid confusion with other 'grandfathers'. Furthermore, the term is used regardless of the age of the Paramount Chief or whether any kinship link exists between the speaker and the Chief. Thus in Nongoba Bullom one might often witness an ancient elder addressing the young Paramount Chief as 'grandfather'. The Paramount Chief is also 'grandfather' to his own kinsmen regardless of the exact kinship relation. Why is the Paramount Chief addressed as 'mada'? Village chiefs are not so referred to. A village chief is 'nde' to his contemporaries and might even be addressed as 'ndui' (child) by a deprecating elder if he is a relatively young man. Often the village chief is simply referred to as such, ta mahei. The significance of the term of address and reference 'mada' as regards the Paramount Chief lies in his position as ndo mahei, 'land chief'. Mada is the oldest living cognatic ancestor and it is through such a person that one claims and exercises the right to farm on an area of land. Hence the 'land chief' is also 'mada'.

Let us now consider a land tenure dispute. This case was initiated by one Bagi of Baoma village against Senesi of Mambwema village. Without going into details Bagi claimed that Senesi had no right to a piece of land he was farming and that it was his. Senesi countered this

by claiming he had such a right. Bagi brought eight witnesses and Senesi four. Examples of their testimonies are given below.

A witness for Bagi:

"Jabi, Senesi's father married his daughter to Farma of Baoma, so all Jabi's kinsmen (ndehubla) called Farma 'mble' (brother-in-law).

Another witness for Bagi:

"I came to Baoma as a stranger (hota) with my household (mawe) and stayed with Fatoma. When I asked for some land (mema ve ngie, literally give me a feeding place) Fatoma gave me land between Baoma and Mambwema. I asked where I must stop brushing Fatoma said I should stop between Belebu, Kanehu, Jawi, Kpowiibu, and the sacred bush (ngolela). I farmed there for many years with no dispute (njepe)."

A witness for Senesi:

"There is no boundary between Mambwema and Baoma (ndoahugbi Mambwema loahu tao Baoma). Mambwema and Baoma are brothers (Mambwema tao Baoma ndebla mia a tie)"

Senesi's other witnesses repeated this testimony in almost the same words. The burden of Bagi's case lies in the assertion that the kinship link between Baoma and Mambwema is affinal and not cognatic and secondly that there is a recognized boundary between the lands of the two villages. Senesi countered with the opposite assertion.

Now it is important to emphasise that the witnesses said no more and no less. Senesi did not argue that Baoma and Mambwema are brothers therefore I have a right to the use of the land therefore Bagi cannot stop me making a farm on the land. And by the same token Bagi did not argue that Baoma and Mambwema are affines and therefore Senesi has no right to the land. Nor were these arguments implied. The dispute had been described to me as a 'land dispute' (ndo yepe) but I had great difficulty appreciating this fact during the proceedings. But

when it is realised that kinship relations are property, in the sense of rights and not objects, that the language of kinship is also the language of property then puzzlement disappears.

It is also relevant to note the concepts used when a stranger (hota) asks for land to make a farm as one of Bagi's witnesses did. A stranger does not ask for land (ndomei) since this would involve an assertion of consanguineous kinship which has been recognized as non-existent through his formal status of hota. Such a person asks for mema (mehe, food; -ma suffix signifying place) conceptually and empirically quite distinct from ndoma in the associated rights and obligations, a point we have already noted in the analysis of Mojiba social organization, to which we must now return.

In Mojiba's household, for example, Moiba farms with his son Tommy. That is, their respective domestic groups combine in ways already discussed. Now regardless of other contexts in which Tommy is a junior and his father an elder in the particular instance of the exercise of land rights Tommy is in no sense a jural minor. It would be misleading and erroneous to describe Tommy and his domestic group as farming on his father's land and being rewarded in kind. Tommy is in no sense waiting for his father to die and for the land-farms to become his own. Crudely, but essentially, the land he farms is as much his own as it ever will be.

It will be recalled that in the organization of production it is apparent that Tommy does not farm in the role of landless labourer.

Their resources are combined to make a farm in the bush which is subsequently divided territorially into two parts. Though only a unitary area of bush is cleared it in fact comprises two farms (kpa) corresponding to the two units of consumption or domestic groups. In no way can Tommy's rights to this farm land nor the exercise of these rights be considered different from those of his father, Moiba. Both would deny such a suggestion. Tenurial rights to land, that is kinship, is a necessary but not sufficient condition for their combining together in production. The accretion of their domestic groups is directly related to the pragmatic requirements of the political economy as a result of the processes of the developmental cycle of their domestic groups. It is not a jural phenomenon.

Within Luseni's household Senesi, his married son, does not have a farm of his own in the sense that Moinina and Soo have. The land brushed by Luseni's household comprises three farms corresponding to the domestic groups of Luseni, Moinina and Soo. They are all, of course, of different sizes corresponding to the size of the respective domestic groups. Senesi and his brothers farm completely with Luseni. They are without farms of their own not for jural reasons, because they have no rights to land or to make a farm but because it would be economically impractical for all concerned. The same considerations regarding Tommy and his father however still apply in this case. Senesi and his brothers do not work for Luseni qua labourers in return for which they receive food and lodging, they work with Luseni under his direction on their own land to produce their own food.

This principle applies also as regards the ancestors.

Like children they are unable to make their own farms and thus exercise their rights directly. But they do ensure the well being of their lands and descendants and thus contribute to the production of food and which must therefore be periodically presented to them.

In all these cases the ostensible differences in rights to land are essentially differences in degree and not differences in kind. A child or an ancestor does not make a farm for singularly pragmatic reasons. The rights and obligations in each case are identical and stem from the common denominator of consanguineous kinship.

The correlate of this system on the ground is found in what has been termed 'shifting cultivation', the particular details of which concerning the Sewa Mende have already been described in Chapter III. Now it is important to recognize this system of agriculture as radically distinct from anything that exists or has existed in the historical past in Western Europe.¹ Though we have here translated the Mende term *kpae* as 'farm' it has little in common with the significance and connotation of the English concept. Above all in no sense can one speak of 'farms' being inherited as an object of property among the Sewa Mende. In this respect, and through a singular concentration on inheritance as a means of devolving property, Goody is led to conclude for the Lodagaa that "the inheritance of land under swidden cultivation is not

1. P. de Schlippe, Shifting Cultivation in Africa, London, 1956.

of great significance, since within a short time particular plots revert to bush again ... The inheritance of specific rights has much greater significance in respect of land that is permanently cultivated."¹ And since "from the standpoint of this study, the most important method of acquiring property is by the process of inheritance"² we are led to believe that land producing the staple really is of no significance in the social system compared with the garden patches around the homesteads cultivated by the women for supplementary vegetables and condiments. Prima facie this situation is hardly credible. Again the use of the terms 'land' and 'plot' synonymously is to be treated with suspicion.

Sewa Mende never speak of acquiring rights to farms (kpa) but to ndoma (land-place, ground) or mema (feeding-place) according to the jural relations of the persons involved. In other words there is an explicit distinction between farms and farmland. This distinction allows for the necessary degree of flexibility in the exploitation of the land by the land use techniques available through the units of consumption and production organized for this purpose. Farms must be separate from the land in order that they may move around spatially and change in size according to the requirements of the constituent domestic groups in the unit of production.

Though I have no data as regards the Mojiba households I was able to survey the cassava farms of three domestic groups from

1. J. Goody, 1962, op. cit., P.336.

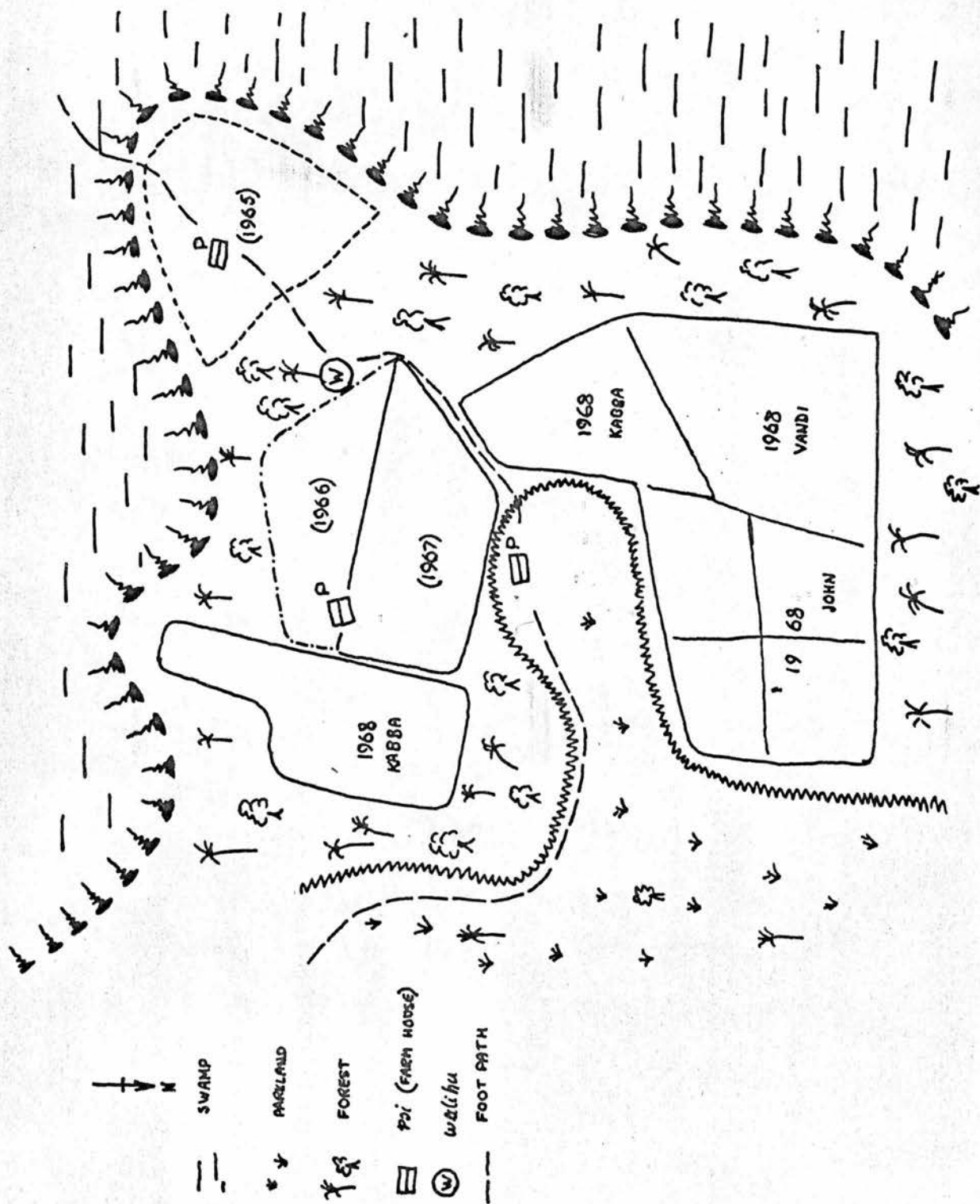
2. ibid., P.311.

Gbap. Despite the fact that these domestic groups are farming swamp rice on the mechanically cultivated riverain grasslands and are hence engaged in a different syndrome from their upland counterparts, they necessarily follow the upland pattern when making cassava farms by the techniques of shifting cultivation.

Six households are involved in this venture; three from Gbap and one from Mofan, Moseba and Gondama villages respectively. My information relates to the Gbap domestic groups only. One of these domestic groups, Kaba, has farmed upland cassava for some years. The other two made their first farms in 1968.

Map 8 is a sketch map of the area, called Mopaala, where the farms are made. The land is owned by Kaba and his kinsmen. The map shows how Kaba's farms have moved from 1965. The 1965 cassava farm has not quite reverted to bush and is distinguishable on the ground. The farmhouse (poi) in the middle has fallen out of use. The 1966 farm has no cassava in it and the vegetation has just begun to regenerate. Cassava tubers are being harvested from the 1967 farm, the stems from which will be planted in the 1968 farm. The 1967 farm will produce cassava until the 1968 farm is ready to be harvested.

As regards changes in area over time corresponding to increases or decreases in the domestic group size it was not possible to collect reliable historical data on any one household nor trace the boundaries of a 'cassava farm' that had been abandoned more than four years ago. Hence we must resort to comparing contemporary domestic groups and their

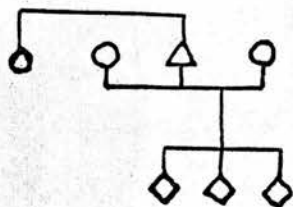


MAP 8 SKETCH MAP OF CASSAVA FARMS AT NOPARLA AND YEAR BRUSHED

farms. Again it must be emphasised that at Mopaala the 1968 farms were not brushed individually and separately by each domestic group. The combined group of adult men cleared in unison two areas (A and B on the map) which were subsequently divided among the six households. Allowing for the crude surveying techniques of the farmers, errors in my own calculations and extraneous factors such as the other agricultural interests of the farmers the correspondences in Figure 27 as regards domestic group size and composition and the size of the respective farms, are notable. While no statistical significance is or can be claimed for this material and therefore does not establish my proposition they do illustrate the point being made and certainly do not, I think, disprove anything.

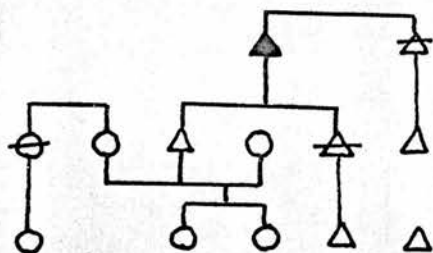
The burden of the argument is an attempt to show how the distinction made between farms and farmland allows for the integration of the techniques of shifting cultivation with the inevitable processes of the developmental cycle of the domestic groups and the resulting need for the continual reallocation of resources.

More generally the analysis has revealed a systematic configuration of elements relating to an important aspect of the Sewa Mende social system. It may be described as follows. There are two relatively immutable elements and at another level two sets that are necessarily processual as a result of bio-ecological parameters. The persisting and immutable forms are 'kinship' (ndehu) and the 'land' (ndoma). They converge in two highly significant societal categories ngafanga and kulokwei. Ngafanga and kulokwei are both complex compounds



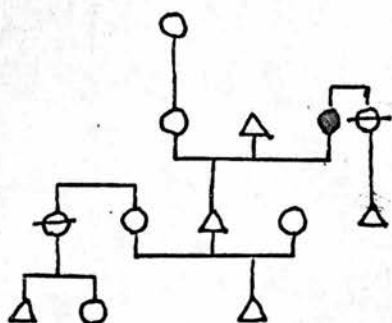
1 MALE ADULT JOHN

1.9 ACRES



△ 3 MALE ADULTS VANDI

4.1 ACRES



△ 3 MALE ADULTS KABBA

3.5 ACRES

FIG 27 DOMESTIC GROUPS AND CASSAVA FARM SIZES AT MOPALA

of people and land, at different levels. This system and its implications are worked out in the distinctions made between land and farms on the one hand and kinship and households on the other. Farms like households are empirically ephemeral. They may shift around, change in size and even disappear altogether.

CHAPTER VII

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION III :

KINSHIP, PROPERTY AND DOMESTIC GROUP ORGANIZATION IN THE RIVERSIDE ZONE

Gbap, the riverside village is, like Mojiba, divided into two sections but for quite different reasons. On the riverside and built on the river levee of alluvium is that part of the village known as tawoveihu, the old village. Separated from the old village by swamp is the new village which is built on the sand. The new village is not referred to as such (taninahu) but as kambama 'the place on the grave'. Here the deceased from the old village used to be buried and where the graves of the paramount chiefs are to be found. This division of Gbap in no way corresponds to the division of Mojiba into two kulokwei tawoveihu and kambama are geo-historical resultants.

Gbap is also much more diverse in its urban functions than Mojiba. A feature which results from its position as Chiefdom headquarters and its location on the riverside. The N.A. (Native Administration) buildings are all located in the new village with the exception of Speaker Jenge's house. The N.A. establishment comprises the Paramount Chief and two speakers; the Chiefdom Secretary and Treasurer, two court clerks, a sanitary officer, an agricultural instructor and a sergeant four chiefdom police. Also found in the new village is the R.C.M. primary school and its teacher, the Dispensary and Dispenser,

the Post Office and Postal Agent. These elements are, of course, directly related to Gbap's position as Chiefdom Headquarters.

On the other hand there is a degree of commerce and industry that is a function of its situation on the river, at the junction of land river communication and hence is present in all other villages on the banks of the Sewa and Waanje. There is one trader in commodities, rice and piassava, with his establishment in the old village, a shop in the new village dealing in consumer goods, cloth, soaps, hardware and two petty traders in similar goods. There are also five gin factories, a rice huller and a carpenter. Three of the gin factories are in the hands of the trader, one of the petty traders and the Dispensary Porter. The Rice Huller was bought by a loan granted to the present President of Gbap Rice Farmers Marketing co-operative Society by the Co-operative Department. These elements are to be found in varying degrees in all the riverside villages, Bullom, Yile, Kathin, Subu, Gbamani, Tormagbagbahu, etc.. In each there is usually one, sometimes two traders in commodities petty traders, gin factories and a craftsman, usually a carpenter. However, despite this description it should not be concluded that persons pursue these activities to the exclusion of others. Thus the trader in commodities also deals in consumer goods, has several acres of mechanically cultivated swamp rice and was also during most of my stay in Gbap in the transport and freighting business. On the other hand the members of farming households will individually indulge in buying and selling even if only on a very limited scale. Any cash that is not required immediately is invested in some commodity which is then sold off piecemeal. Tobacco either in the form of leaves or cigarettes

and kerosene are the most common. Nevertheless as we shall see, the degree and kind of involvement of a person in the affairs of the community correlates with his or her degree of involvement in activities other than farming. The farmers constitute a 'we group' vis a vis the traders, chiefdom N.A. officials and others who form a 'they group'. This view is not, however, reciprocated to quite the same extent, that is, the non-farmers do not see themselves as a 'we group' vis a vis the farmers.

Gbap has not always been the seat of the Paramount Chiefs of Nongoba Bullom Chiefdom. In 1929 Paramount Chief Alfred Tucker moved from Mowillam up river to Gbap as a result of the policy of Colonial Administration whereby Chiefdom Headquarters and N.A.'s should be located in the centre of their respective chiefdoms. This move initiated the expansion of Gbap across the swamp where the Paramount Chiefs compound was first established. Prior to Mowillam and Gbap the Tuckers have held court at Mochasi and Bohol, both down river.

The Tuckers claim descent from an English slave trader as do the Rogers of Sulima, the Caulkers (or Corkers) of Shenge and the Cleavelands south of the Ribí river. Christopher Fyfe writes:

"Thus from the fifteenth century the coastal peoples were habituated to Europeans. When York Island was a headquarters the European population of the Sherbro was larger than for another two centuries. Most had African wives. When their children grew up the Company employed them. Two sons of Zachary Rogers, chief Sherbro agent 1677 - 1681, went to trade in the Gallenas early in the 18th Century. They or their descendants may have married into the ruling family of Massaquoi to found a dynasty almost as powerful as the chief's (though tradition declares its founder an English man, Charles Rogers, who came straight out to the Gallenas.)

Henry Tucker, perhaps a descendant of another of the Company's early employees (though tradition also traces the Tuckers back to an independent English trader), was established on the mainland by the Shebar Straits by the mid-eighteenth century, a rich trader, eating off silver plate."¹

There then followed a confused period of intermittent warfare between the coastal middlemen and upland vendors and both being subject to the attempts of the British Government to eradicate the slave trade. In 1825 one Major General Turner made a treaty with the Caulkers by which they gave up their sovereignty and became British Subjects. James Tucker, however did not sign and refused to give up slave trading. Turner followed him when he left Bohol and retreated up the Sewa. In 1881 Turner's treaty was revived and acknowledged by the Caulkers. In 1882 a similar treaty was signed with the Tuckers. "W.E. Tucker, an elderly literate chief (clerk long ago in Freetown to Colonial Secretary Cole) remembered Turner's treaty being made and persuaded his family it was still valid. He and two brothers were stipended on the understanding they keep the country quiet".²

Clearly during this period the Tuckers had usurped the indigenous chiefs culminating in the recognition of W.E. Tucker as the chief. Oral traditions bear this out where it is told that the Bumpe's were the chiefs before the Tuckers and they ruled from Nongoba Bullom village about a mile and a half downstream from Gbap.

W. E. Tucker, or Ba William as he is referred to by his

1. C. Fyfe, A History of Sierra Leone, Oxford, 1962, P.10.

2. Fyfe, ibid., P.430.

descendants, is recalled along with his ancestor, the first Tucker who is reputed to have been an Englishman. Nobody that I spoke to, however, had any idea of events and personalities in the intervening period. Ba William was followed on his death by his son Charles. After Charles came one Baki John Tucker the father of the present chief Jonathan Baki John Kabakaba Tucker. The story told by non Tuckers goes as follows: "Ba William was the first Tucker chief and he had a special friend (diamo) called Kabakaba who became important in the affairs of the chiefdom.

There was some trouble involving the chief of Jange in cannibalism (gboni). The D.C. asked Ba William to recommend somebody to be regent in Jange in the meantime. Ba William put forward his friend Kabakaba's son, Baki John, but Baki John did not want to leave his father and Ba William. Ba William later censured that Baki John became chief when Ba William died. Baki John later became chief and now Baki John's son is the present chief."

The Tuckers, however, relate that Baki John is a cognate of Ba William. Those who speak English describe Kabakaba and Ba William as "1st cousins" while the illiterate claimed that "Kabakaba was the son of Ba William's daughter."

On Baki John's death the position reverted to the descendants of Ba William, Alfred, James and the late Paramount Chief, Charles Tucker, the son of Ba William's immediate successor. The present chief succeeded to the position in 1963. Chief J.B.K. Tucker is a highly

educated man, both formally in English and in Mende. Prior to his election as Paramount Chief he occupied several administrative positions in Government Service acquiring considerable resources. The failure of Ba William's descendents to produce a candidate of similar calibre largely accounts for the position reverting to the Kabakaba line. In the 1967 election he defeated Paramount Chief Sebure of Bum Chiefdom to take one of the twelve seats in the House of Representatives allocated to the Paramount Chiefs of the country. His interests are not restricted to his chiefdom and thus he finds himself spending the larger part of his time in the capital Freetown.

These details are essential to the background but since our interest is in Gbap as a riverside village we shall not present here much material relating to the political activities of the Paramount Chief but only in so far as they relate specifically to Gbap and its social organisation. Our interest is primarily focused on lower levels of political organization namely the village and its constituent groups. In fact as a result of the Provinces Act 1965, which separated the judicial and executive functions of the Paramount Chief and constituted Native Courts under a Court President elected by the so-called Tribal Authority much of the influence of the Paramount Chief in chiefdom affairs was removed.

The Tuckers form, as one would expect, the most significant descent group in the social organization of Gbap and almost all the permanent inhabitants claim some degree of cognatic or affinal kinship to the Tuckers. Figure 28 shows the kinship links of the Tuckers in Gbap.

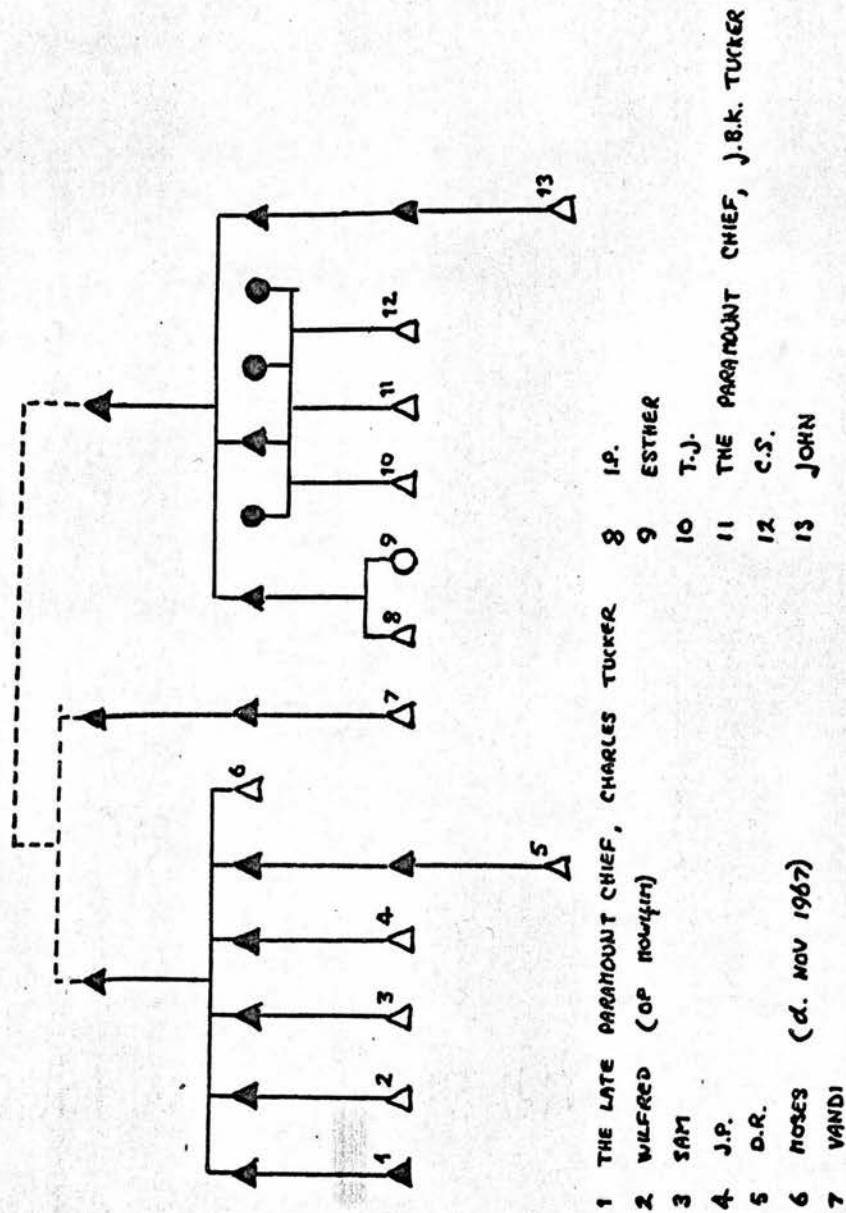


FIG 28 THE TUCKERS IN GRAP

It is in no sense an attempt to describe the genealogy and descendents of Ba William or Kabakaba with any degree of specificity. This diagram merely attempts to summarise how the Tuckers in Gbap see their relationships among each other and how they describe it to others. The dotted lines represented relationships that are rather vaguely asserted, the continuous lines ones that are quite positively testified to. Neither need be more accurate in terms of exact genealogy than the other: the significance of kinship links lies not in the biological facts of pedigree but in their sociology.

Considering first of all the Ba William Tuckers. Sam is the point of articulation in the community of a number of households which collectively make up part of Gbap that is referred to as katawoveihu (the old compound). The name derives from the fact that this part of town was the site of the previous Paramount Chief's buildings, Katawoveihu is constituted as in Figure 29.

The eight households of katawoveihu can be considered a social group vis a vis the rest of Gbap not only on the grounds of their spatial distribution, though this is of course, a relevant factor. In their affairs they all look to Sam for guidance. Disputes between members of different domestic groups in katawoveihu are taken to Sam where the issue is debated outside his house. A settlement is not always arrived at in which case the disputants may take the case to the village chief or even the N.A. Court.

However, it would be misleading if this group were to be

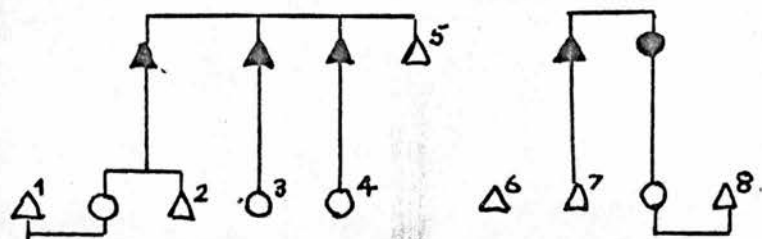


FIG 29 KINSHIP STRUCTURE OF *katawovelku*, GBAP

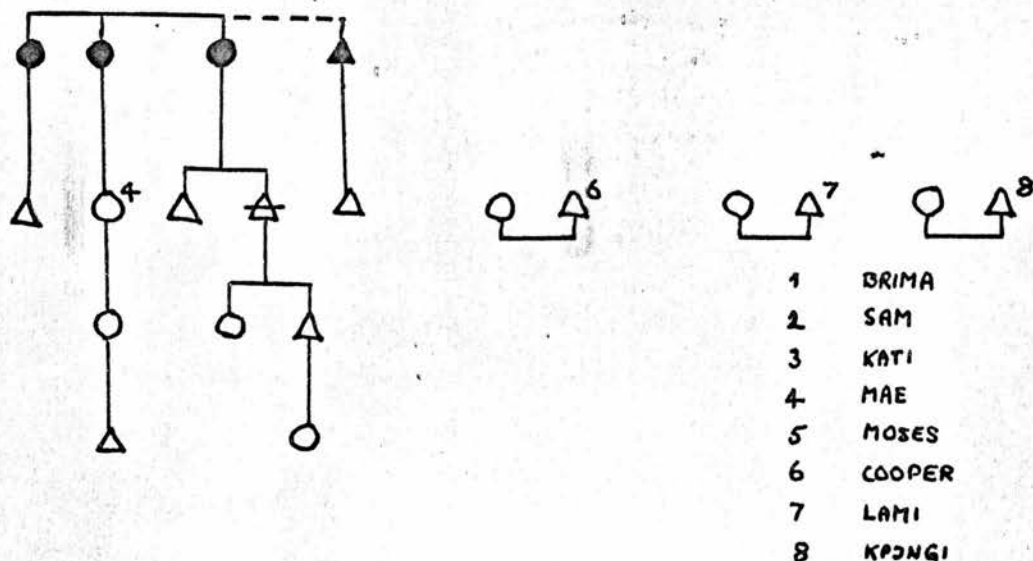
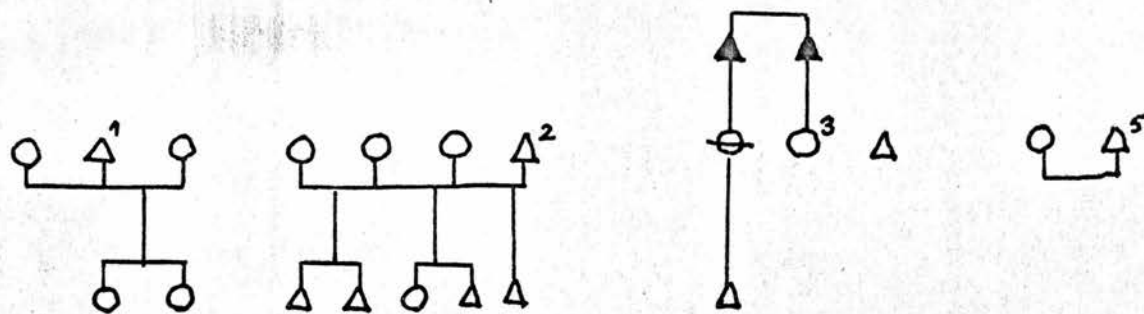


FIG 30 COMPOSITION OF DOMESTIC GROUPS
IN *katawovelku*, GBAP

- 1 DRIMA
- 2 SAM
- 3 KATI
- 4 MAE
- 5 MOSES
- 6 COOPER
- 7 LAMI
- 8 KPONGI

attributed any corporate quality. It is instructive to compare the configuration of kinship within Katawoveihu with that of one of the two corpora te kulokwei's in Mojiba. Only four, Sam, Kati, Mae, Moses, domestic groups are related consanguineously, three domestic groups are quite unrelated to Sam while Brima is related to Sam affinally. Kpongi, however, relates that he is an affine of Sam (his sister's daughter's husband's father's father's brother's son in fact) a relationship that Sam, however, did not volunteer. Kati described Lami as her brother (nya nde) when explaining how she had given one acre of her four acre plot a relationship she explicitly denied sometime later when Lami failed to help her weed her own rice plot. While though Cooper and Moses combine their productive effort on a joint plot of swamp rice no relationship, putative or otherwise, is claimed by either side.

The katawoveihu situation differs not only internally from that existing in the Mojiba kulokweis but also externally. In the latter situation no consanguineous kinship links or even affinal links were deemed to exist between the two kulokweis within the village. On the other hand within the Gbap group consanguineous and affinal ties extend beyond the confines of the katawoveihu to other domestic groups in Gbap. Sam, Kati, Mae and Moses as Tuckers are therefore cognates of the other Tuckers living elsewhere in Gbap. Cooper has cognates elsewhere in Gbap who in fact form a descent group from which T. J. Tucker has taken a wife. Lami is a cognate of Solomon Trinity mentioned above and also claims that village chief Karimu is his wife's mother's brother.

Furthermore this feature leads us to reconsider the rather specifically defined members of katawoveihu. Solomon Trinity has perhaps been rather arbitrarily excluded while some of the domestic groups inhabiting the dwellings to the north of katawoveihu might also be included in view of their participation in day to day affairs. This link up may become more specific since arrangements are being made between Sam and one Kaba for the latter to take one of Sam's daughters as a wife. Clearly if one were to proceed the discreteness of the katawoveihu group would soon be lost in the wider Gbap community.

This preliminary analysis of katawoveihu implies the existence of other such groups in Gbap and this is indeed the case. A similar rather ill defined but palpably discrete group exists in the old village. This group is focused on the western half of the old village and like katawoveihu is identified by a name deriving from a local feature, in this case the jetty where the river launches berth and from where most people embark to traverse the river to their farms (njelama). As in katawoveihu the inhabitants of this part of town form a group among whom interaction is more frequent than with other members of the community as a whole. The most visible aspect of this is in the congregation of the menfolk in the evening on the verandah of Speaker Jenge's house or Vandi's or Lamina's.

Lamina is recognised in a rather informal way as the senior of the group and it is he who arbitrates over disputes among this group in a similar mode as Sam of katawoveihu. However, he is not quite such a dominant personality as Sam. If we consider Figure 31 which shows the configuration of kinship links among the seven household heads who

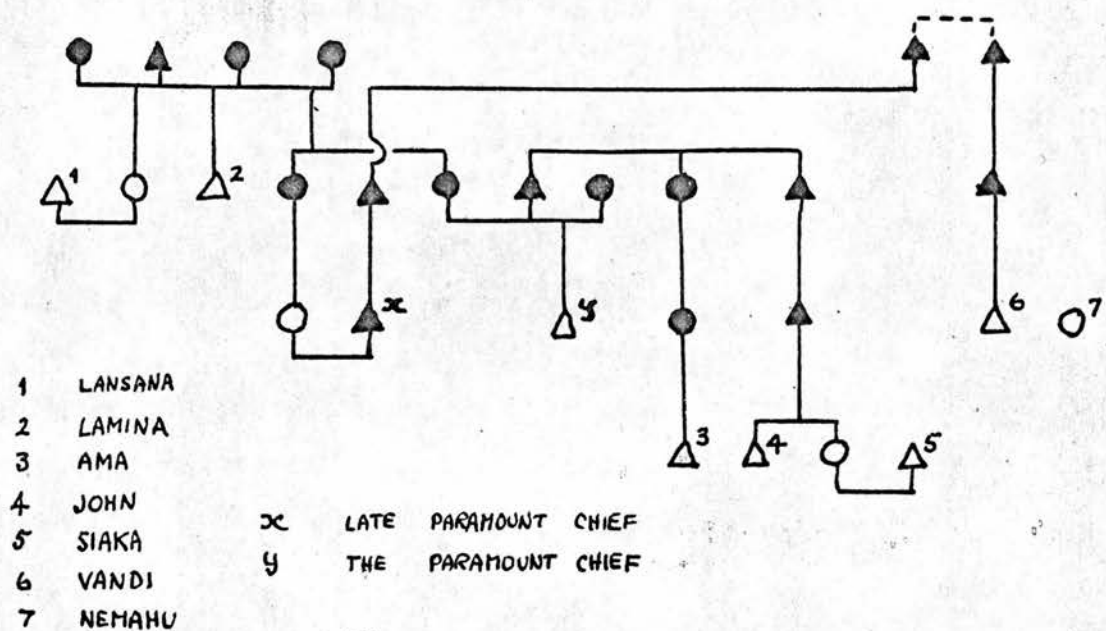


FIG 31 KINSHIP STRUCTURE OF *njelama*, GBAP

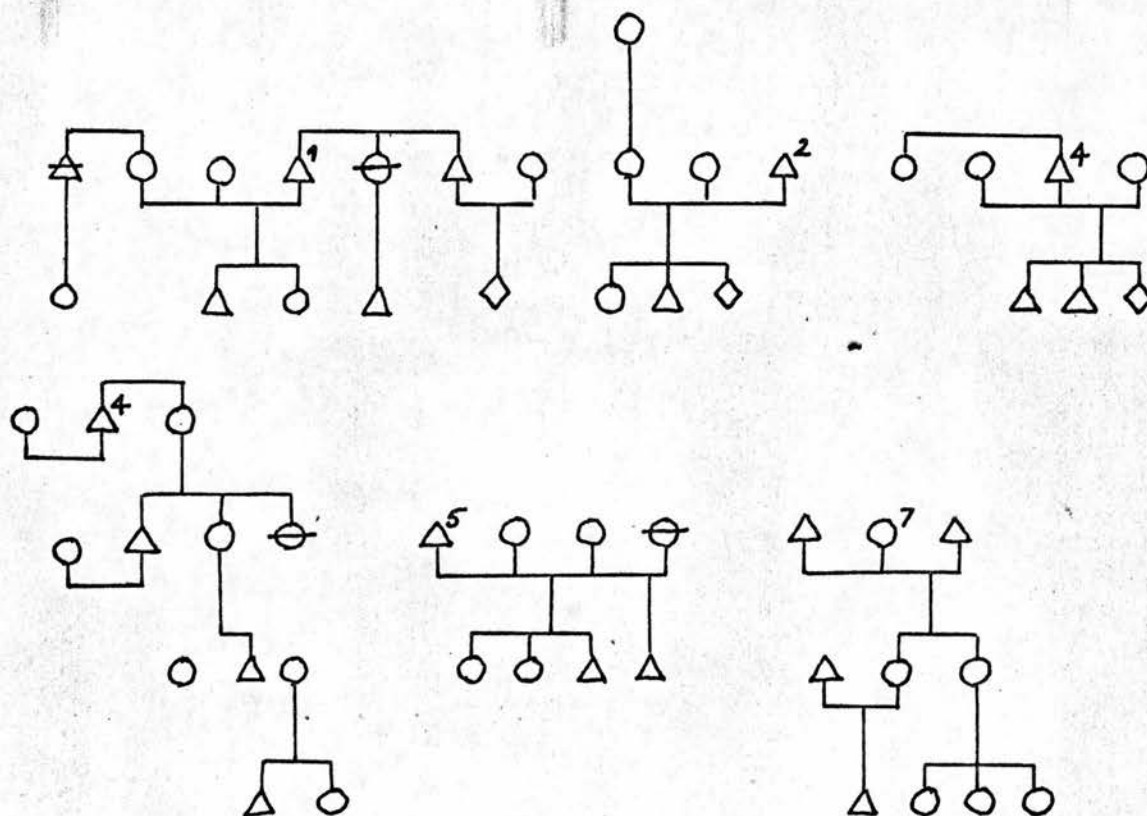


FIG 32 COMPOSITION OF DOMESTIC GROUPS
IN *njelama*, GBAP

constitute the core of njelama and Figure 32 which describes the composition of the domestic groups we can perhaps see why. In katawoveihu Sam is in a position of some authority by virtue of his position in the kinship network and also through his wealth especially in terms of human resources gauged by the size of his domestic group. In njelama, however, no single household emerges as the most powerful either in terms of position in the overall pattern of kinship or in terms of domestic group size. Gbap is Lamina's maternal home and though not a Tucker by descent is particularly well connected to the ruling house, both the Kabakaba's and the Ba Williams'. He is a classificatory uncle (kenya) to the present chief, J.B.K. Tucker and an affine of the late chief Charles Tucker. On the other hand Vandi, John and Ama can claim consanguineous ties to Ba William or Kabakaba and respectable domestic groups. Lansana and Siaka though linked only through affinal ties and 'strangers' to Gbap are attributed respect through their positions as President of the Gbap R.F.M.C.S. and President of the N.A. Court respectively.

This preliminary analysis of the njelama group reveals a heterogeneous structure in terms of kinship similar to that found to exist in katawoveihu and differing from the kulokwei structures of Mojiba. Within the group there is no single apical ancestor from which the household heads claim descent and no attempt is made to incorporate affinally related or unrelated persons in terms of consanguinity. While on the other hand cognatic kinship ties extend beyond the group to other households elsewhere in Gbap and, as in the katawoveihu situation, there is no definitive boundary demarcating membership or non membership of the group. T. J. Tucker is a possible candidate but his association, for reasons that will appear

later is essentially ephemeral. Speaker Jenge has been excluded since he spends most of his time in his home town of Gbamani but the fact that he chose to build a house in njelama instead of in the new village near the N.A. where he was invited to is significant.

There is a third and possibly a fourth similar such grouping of households. One focuses on the village chief Karimu, but is almost congruent with his own extended family and other at the east end of the old village, called nyandehu. The former is constituted as in Figure 34 which highlights Karimu's situation as being head of the largest single domestic group and the loosely structured kinship pattern that has already been recorded as regards katawoveihu and njelama.

These groupings by no means exhaust the households existing in Gbap. There are a number of families that find themselves in Gbap as a result of their head being employed by the N.A., also the teacher, the dispenser and the traders. Their participation in village affairs with the exception of one of the traders is negligible. Secondly there are a number of families that live in Gbap for only part of the year, returning to their homes elsewhere at the beginning of the rains and not returning to Gbap until the harvest begins. Thirdly there are a few households that are not aligned with any of the groupings. These three classes of households do not ally themselves into units similar to the katawoveihu or njelama households.

Those families that live in Gbap for the duration of the swamp rice farming season only disperse themselves among the informal associations

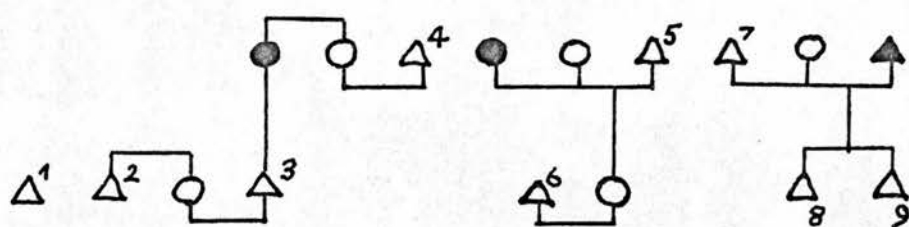


FIG 33 KINSHIP STRUCTURE OF KARIMU'S
(THE VILLAGE CHIEF) NEIGHBOURHOOD

- 1 HOMO
- 2 SOO
- 3 KARIMU
- 4 SEGE
- 5 TRY
- 6 SO
- 7 HONI
- 8 MUNDA
- 9 KPUKWU

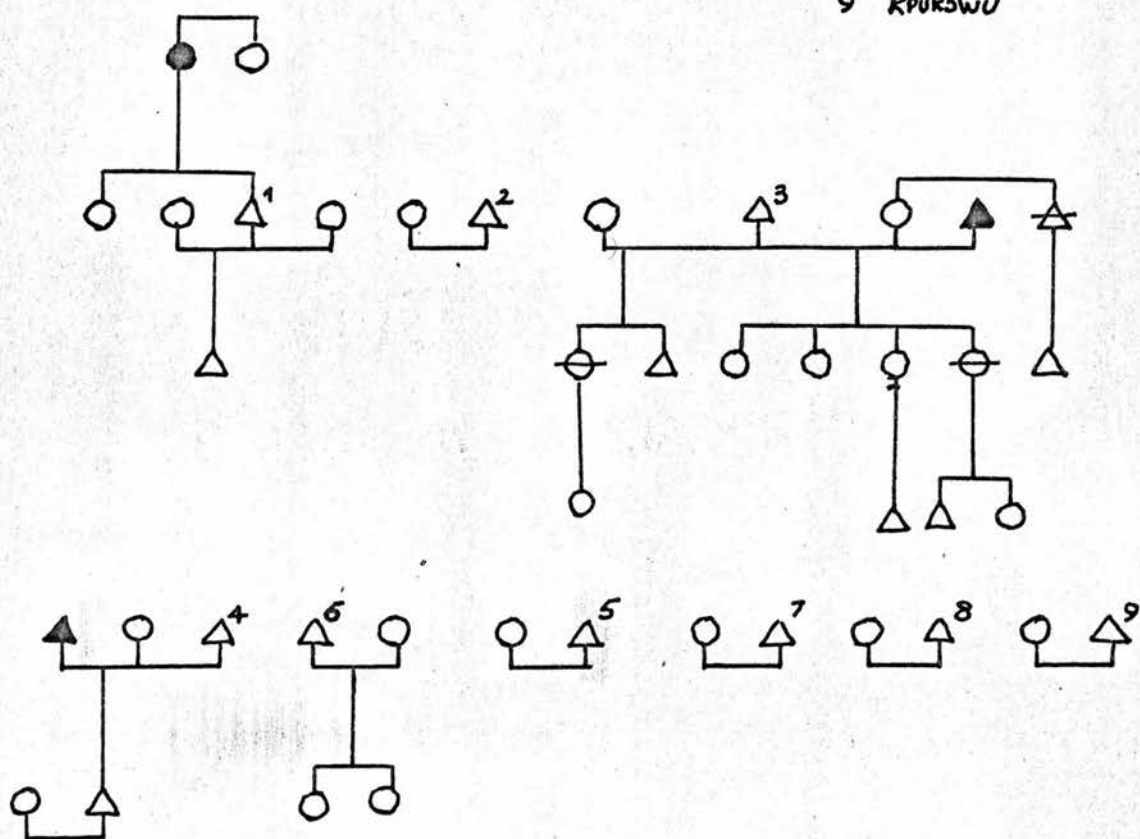


FIG 34 COMPOSITION OF DOMESTIC GROUPS IN KARIMU'S
NEIGHBOURHOOD

already described. Thus during the swamp rice farming season there is an addition to the katawovei neighbourhood group. One Farma Tucker from Bohol comes with his household and resides with his father, Moses Tucker. Rasidu from Kangama has no kin in Gbap (though he does claim that the Paramount Chief is his wife's brother's daughter's daughter's husband) and hence, as is customary, takes up residence beside the village chief Karimu. In the old village Bonbon has his own small house and attaches himself to the njelama group while Musa of Njopowahu comes to live with his wife's cognates who form the core of the small neighbourhood group in nyandehu. Finally there are two affinally related households from Bonthe. The head of one is a Moslem teacher/priest (kamo) and he takes up residence with his colleague in Gbap, Boakari. His affine, however, moves in with Munda who is associated with the group focusing on the village chief. Generally each household takes up residence with kinsmen either cognates or affines. Indeed in almost all these instances Gbap, as a location for indulging in swamp rice farming, has been chosen because of the presence of such kin through whom induction into the community may be made. If no such link exists as perhaps in the case of Rasidu then it is customary to become the guest/stranger (hota) of the village chief. Whatever the case the household will find itself aligned with such groups as the inducing kinsman is attached.

At this point it might be appropriate to review the general situation in Gbap and appraise the nature and function of the three or four neighbourhood groups that have been described. Apart from the rather general and vague fact that the men of the associating households congregate to discuss current affairs and topics in the evening on their

verandahs while the womenfolk circulate around the kitchen and cooking areas is there anything more specific that might point to an element of corporateness the analysis of which would account for such configurations? First of all let us consider some of the more formal issues in which these groups mobilise for action.

In May 1967 Kati of katawoveihu approached one Sally of Mae's household also in katawoveihu and asked her to pay back a sum of seventeen shillings that Kati had loaned her sometime previously. When Sally retorted that she would not because no such debt existed Kati went to Sam who called Sally. Brima and others of the neighbourhood were also present when the parties explained their respective positions. Sam suggested among other things that if Sally was short of money then she could work off the debt by working on Kati's farm. Kati and the others thought this an admirable solution but Sally was quite intransigent, such a solution would amount to admitting the existence of the debt which she consistently denied. No settlement being possible Kati then went to the N.A. Court where after listening to the disputants the elders said that Kati should swear Sally. Kati agreed but Sally continued to deny the debt. Meanwhile Sally left Mae's household and took up residence with one Solomon Trinity's domestic group. When Kati had let it be generally known that she had acquired two medicines (hale) and that she was about to swear, Sam, Brima, Lami, and Allieu (of Solomon Trinity's domestic group) came to Kati and prevailed upon her not to swear. Kati again agreed but said she would keep the medicine ready until the money was in her hands. This occurred in November 1967 and when I left the field in June 1968 a settlement had yet to be reached.

The relevant feature of this dispute is the personnel involved. Though the affair was known generally throughout the village active participation in the dispute was restricted to the households of katawoveihu. In the njelama neighbourhood we find the same pattern.

One evening there congregated at Lamina's house, Speaker Jenge, Vandí, Wilfred Tucker of Mowillim, Nemahua and John Tucker to discuss a complaint by Speaker Jenge that his son Soo had been insubordinate, in particular he was never around when required and appeared to be spending his time with Soo Alfredi, the son Wilfred but part of Vandí's household though living in Nemahu's house. Nemahu in whose house both Soo Jenge and Soo Alfredi were living 'begged' (temugale) Speaker Jenge to forgive her which he did. Wilfred admonished his son while Vandí complained he was unable to control Soo Alfredi. A bottle of njalei (cold water) was produced and everybody partook. It should be noted that the issue was strictly between Nemahu and Speaker Jenge but extended to involve several other households. As in the previous case this extension and limitation of the dispute does not take place within the context of kinship since no systematic configuration of kinship exists between the participants but within the context of ^a rather loose neighbourhood association.

That these associations have some explicitly recognised discrete existence is witnessed by a rather different situation. In 1965, largely at the Paramount Chief's instigation but with the general acceptance of the elders, it was decided to cultivate the swamp between the old and new villages. The organization of brushing and hoeing by

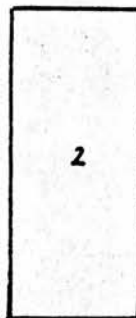
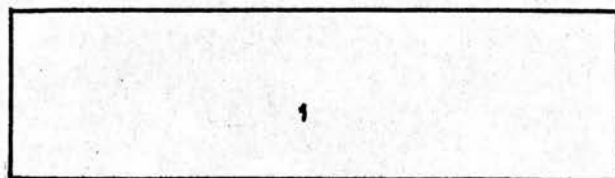
the men, weeding by the women and harvesting by both sexes was based on a division of the area into four parts. Each part was worked by members of the four neighbourhood groups. Though I was able to witness only the harvesting it was interesting to note that each of the four sections were not completed simultaneously. When one group had finished harvesting they left the field and did not move to another section to help their more tardy fellow villagers. Enquiries at the time brought forth the suggestion that there are four kulokweis in Gbap and though the informant thought there were two in the old village and two in the new village he was unable to identify them more specifically. Others didn't think there were any kulokweis in the riverside villages: it is something that occurs only in the upland villages. This information is interesting both in the idea that these groups might be kulokwei and at the same time somehow not kulokwei. It will be our task to take this question further than the actors themselves did. But before doing so it will be useful to consider the village politico-jural organization further.

So far we have only dealt with issues raised within the neighbourhood groupings. In the event of a dispute between members of differing groups the matter is usually taken to the village chief. Occasionally he can effect a settlement but usually Karimu the village chief prefers to take the matter to one J.P. Tucker. Karimu's general ineffectiveness as an agent of social control largely stems from the fact that he is the village chief of the village in which the Paramount Chief and his cognates reside. A dispute between persons of differing groups might quickly become one involving Tuckers in which the intrusion of the

village chief would then be taken as an unwarranted assumption. The fact that little more than lip service is paid to his position was clearly instanced on one occasion when one of John Tucker's wives met a woman from another village who had injured herself on one of the bridges across the swamp on the path to Mokpindibo. The upkeep of the bridge is the responsibility of Gbap village, Mokpindibo and another. John immediately sought Karimu and together they went around the village regaling the men on the disrepair and dangerous state of the bridge. However, it was John who did all the talking occasionally looking to Karimu to add his approval. In effect Karimu was being dragged around merely to add official sanction to the action, rather like a warrant.

In J.P. Tucker we have one of the non-aligned, as it were, household heads. If we follow up the events relating to the village rice field between the old and new villages, especially the meeting of the villagers to decide what was to be done with the produce we shall be able to identify certain others in a similar position and at the same time exemplify further the organizational features of Gbap village.

First of all it is relevant to note the manner in which the people disposed themselves in the N.A. Court 'barri'. This is shown in Figure 35. C.S. Tucker is the half brother of the Paramount Chief and another of the 'non aligned' household heads. C.S. and another paternal half brother, T.J., associate themselves closely with the Paramount Chief and his household. Lamina and Sam have already appeared as the elders of two neighbourhood groups. Lansana is part of Lamina's neighbourhood but has dissociated himself from the general grouping of



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- 1 ADULT MEN
- 2 OLDER ADULT WOMEN
- 3 C.S. TUCKER
- 4 THE PARAMOUNT CHIEF
- 5 LAMINA
- 6 SAM TUCKER
- 7 LANSANA
- 8 I.B. ANTHONY
- 9 ETHNOGRAPHER
- 10 I.P. TUCKER

FIG 35

DISPOSITION OF PERSONS AT
GBAP VILLAGE MEETING

men (koonga) on the grounds that he is not a citizen of Gbap (he arrived in Gbap as a bachelor in 1949 and practised tailoring) and yet important in that he is the elected President of the Co-op. I. B. Anthony is another non aligned household head and friend of J. P. Tucker already mentioned. His home is Batahol village but after some education he became a court clerk and is now the Postal Agent in Gbap. I. P. Tucker is yet another non aligned household head though he does tend to associate with the njelama group. On the whole he is a rather ineffectual man but as the father's brother's son of the Paramount Chief feels himself to be above the general mass. Notable absentees from the meeting were the N.A. personnel, the teacher, dispenser, etc.. T. J. Tucker if had had been present would have sat by the Paramount Chief. J. P. who is partially crippled was unable to attend and he too would have been among the 'platform party'. Finally though the business at hand related to Gbap village we may note again that the village chief associated himself, in the presence of the Tuckers with the adult men (1). On the Paramount Chief's right are grouped some of the women of the village.

The Paramount Chief began by greeting the villagers. He then told them that the rice from the swamp had realised £57 18s and went on to say that the original plan was that this money would be used as the people saw fit in the interests of the town as a whole. Now prior to the meeting most of the people were anticipating a share-out among the households of the money. There was some grumbling and several men walked out.

The Paramount Chief ignored this and called for suggestions.

Sam rose and went to the middle of the assembly. He suggested a new sowe and a seme. This was met with noises of appreciation. Those who walked out now resumed their places. I. P. Tucker then took the floor and said that only the sowe should be built and the balance of the money banked for the future. Solomon Trinity suggested a market place (njopowahu). Biahya said that a new canoe is needed for the ferryman and the village chief said that mosquito nets were needed for strangers visiting the village. John Tucker suggested that only a seme should be built but he was quickly shouted down by the women. When no more suggestions were forthcoming the Paramount Chief summed up and in so doing came down heavily in favour of the initial suggestion for a new sowe and a seme. There were noises of general approval and the meeting broke up except for the Paramount Chief, Lamina and the women officials of the Sande society (sowii) who discussed the costs and design of the projected buildings. At this point it was interesting to note that the sowii heretofore in agreement over the rebuilding of the sowe with the Paramount Chief came into conflict with him. The Paramount Chief sees the sowe as a maternity hospital and described an open house with windows and so on. The sowii idea of a maternity hospital is, however, a sowe, that is a small round house without any windows similar in design to their present building. Eventually an uneasy compromise was reached in which the new building would combine elements of both, though neither the Paramount Chief nor the sowii were happy about it.

In this village meeting we have reached the maximum range of Gbap village politics beyond which we move into the sphere of Chieftdom matters which however interesting are beyond the scope of the present

thesis. It is now necessary to review the position and attempt to abstract the main features of Gbap organization so far.

Three levels or contexts of politico-jural activity have emerged: the household, the neighbourhood group of households and the village itself. The level at which a dispute is dealt with is in the first place determined by the parties to the dispute and their relationship to each other. At each level there is a recognized personality around whom the discussion of dispute will be regulated, namely the household head, the leader or elder of the neighbourhood and the village chief though the situation in Gbap as regards the latter was complicated by the Paramount Chief's presence. There also emerged a few 'non aligned' households as regards the neighbourhood groupings but who to varying degrees associate themselves with the Paramount Chief. Most notably T. J. Tucker, the Chief's half brother, who is generally recognized as one of the Paramount Chief's informants or intelligence agents. They inform the Paramount Chief of events and political affairs in the chiefdom. Such a person is termed ngafamoi (literally spirit-person) and has many of the overtones of the English term 'spy'.

Described thus the organization of Gbap as a riverside village parallels that of Mojiba an upland village wherein we found households (mawe), 'neighbourhood groups' (kulokwei) and the village (tei). In fact to such an extent that Gbap villagers themselves suggested the existence of kulokwei's in Gbap, albeit rather uneasily and with reservations, and in our analysis we can see why.

First of all the kinship structure of the Gbap neighbourhood groups or quasi-kulokwei bears little comparison with the cognatic 'virilocal' kulokwei organization of Mojiba. Secondly, it is notable that the disputes and crises that are dealt with in the household, or neighbourhood or village context in Gbap are invariably concerned with debts, theft, trespass, disrespect and so on. I have no record (with the possible exception of households) of a dispute relating to land tenure being dealt with by any of the elements we have so far isolated in Gbap. Finally our analysis of Mojiba village revealed an analogical relationship between the dynamics of domestic group organization in terms of the developmental cycle and the agricultural cycle and the organization of the embracing kulokwei. At each level the cognatic principles of kinship organization were systematically worked out. If we recall the pattern of the agricultural cycle of the riverside domestic groups it can be seen that the rather heterogeneous configuration, in terms of kinship, of the domestic group cycles is duplicated in the heterogeneous organization of the quasi-kulokwei or neighbourhood group we have encountered in Gbap. It is to a consideration of these factors that we must now turn.

An integral part of Gbap is the mechanically ploughed site from which the villagers derive their livelihood. This site, referred to as Gandema site, is also shared by farmers from the villages of Tormagbagbahu, Yile and Solon and Petewoma. It was opened in 1953 when 115 acres were ploughed and allocated to 37 farmers from Gbap and 4 from Tormagbagbahu. In 1967, 406 acres were ploughed and divided into 114 plots varying in size from one acre to 14.5 acres. Forty-eight

of these plots were, according to the records, owned by farmers from Gbap (Table 23).

The first point to note about Gandema site is the disposition of the plots in relation to the plot owners. The site can be divided into four integral subunits; the Solon and Petewoma villagers, the Tormagbagbahu villagers, the Gbap villagers and the Yile villagers. In other words, with the odd exception, a Gbap villager will find himself next to a fellow villager, a Tormagbagbahu villagers beside others from Tormagbagbahu and so on. If however, we consider the disposition of the individual plots within any one of these units no further subdivisions appear. The Gbap farmers, with the exception of six individuals, form a homogeneous bloc. The Gbap villagers are not grouped in any form that corresponds to alignments in village organization. South of Kpongi are the Solon and Petewoma farms after them Tormagbagbahu farmers, while in the West Brima is followed by farmers from Yile. The neighbourhood groupings and their respective constituent households are randomly distributed throughout the site. In other words their spatial distribution in the village is not duplicated in their dispositions on the site. Now before any significance is attached to this phenomenon it has to be pointed out that while residence in Gbap village is largely a matter of individual choice, plots on the site are allocated. Most of the Gbap farmers are still farming the plots they were allocated in 1953 by the field officers of the Division of Agriculture and in this matter it would appear that they had little influence. However, two points should be made in this respect. Firstly, I encountered few farmers who expressed any desire to be elsewhere than their present plot and no attempt has been

Year	Number of Plots	Size (acres)
1953	41 (37)	115
1954	65 (23)	271
1955	83 (28)	215
1956	121 (45)	341
1957	119 (35)	374
1958	74 (38)	237
1959	no records available	
1960	72 (30)	204
1961	90 (39)	302
1962	no records available	
1963	no records available	
1964	110 (53)	390
1965	no records available	
1966	110 (53)	401
1967	114 (48)	405

(the figures in brackets refer to the number of plots farmed by members of Gbap Rice Farmers' Marketing Co-operative Society).

Table 23: Gandema site. Total number of plots and acreage 1953 - 67.

made since 1953 to rearrange themselves in any other way on the site. Those farmers who did voice a wish to move were restricted to the West end of the site and then their motive was singularly pragmatic. Pricey, for example, argued that the plots in the Eastern half were bigger than the plots at his end. It is worth considering his argument in detail but before doing so we need to know that because of the configuration of the site a plot of a given acreage in the East end is more elongated than a plot of the same acreage in the West end. (Figure 36)

Now Pricey argued that plot (a¹) is bigger than plot (a) because it takes longer to walk from one end of plot (a¹) to the other than it does to walk from one end of (a) to the other. Hence the people harvesting (a¹) will finish sometime after those on (a). Therefore, they must have more rice. Pricey described plot (a) as eka guti (guti means both small and short) and plot (a¹) as eka ngoi (ngoi means both big and long). Such arguments in favour of moving to other positions on the site are then essentially economic. Hence with reservations we may attribute some sociological significance to the disposition of Gbap farmers on the site in the synchronic analysis of the social system.

Let us now turn to examine the Gbap farming households in relation to their involvement in swamp rice farming, especially the pattern of the developmental cycle. In Chapter V our analysis of the domestic group agricultural cycle suggested that fission occurs earlier among the riverside households than among those involved in the upland syndrome. In so far as fission relates to the producing phase of the household this does in fact appear to be the case. Unlike the upland

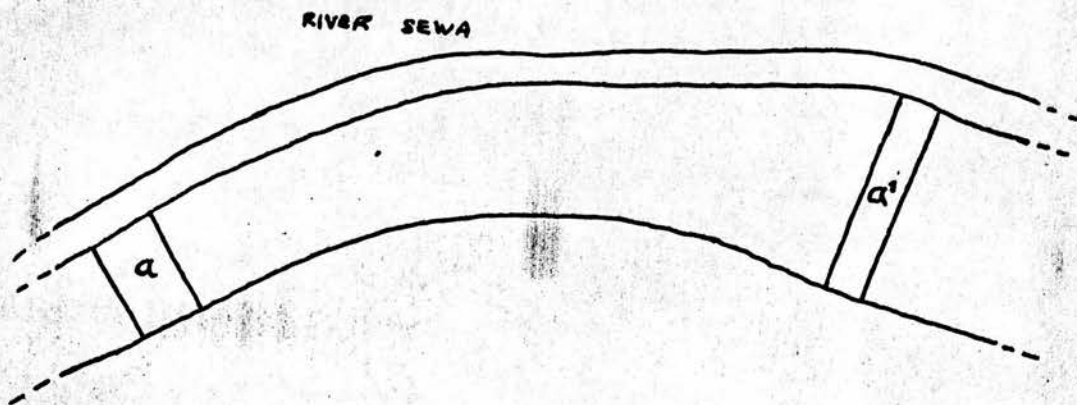


FIG 36 SKETCH MAP OF GANDEMA SITE SHOWING
DIFFERENCES IN PLOT CONFIGURATION
PLOT a = PLOT a' IN AREA

households, in Gbap there are no cases (with one possible exception) of male cognates jointly engaged in a single swamp rice plot. Nevertheless the figures reveal considerable variations in the size of farmers' plots. Table 24 shows a distinct relationship between the size of swamp rice farm and the size of the household in its producing function (adults only). But since household composition in the production phase may be unrelated to developmental factors and merely the ability of the household to recruit harvesters the relationship is better expressed in Table 25 which shows the number of wives of the household against the area of swamp rice farmed by the household. Here the relationship becomes difficult to perceive. From 1 through to 5 acres there is a noticeable corresponding increase in the number of wives, though from 5 to 14 acres the figures relating to wives seem to bear little relation to the acreage farmed. Indeed there is one household of only one wife farming nine acres. This is the household of Ama, and though he has only one wife, his sister and two of her adult daughters are also members of his domestic group who in this context could be regarded as equivalent to the wives in other domestic groups. However, if these figures are taken in conjunction with the data relating to the agricultural cycle of the Gbap households wherein it was shown that the major category of kinsmen accruing to a household during the producing phase were female affines particularly wives cognates, it would appear reasonable to suggest that the acreage farmed by a household is initially determined by the number of wives in the domestic group and thereafter by the ability of these affinal links to effect additional labour resources to overcome the problems of harvesting a large acreage of rice.

Plot size (acres)	Total adults Dry season composition	Total Households	Average size
1	2 2 2	3	2
2	2 3 3 2 3 3	6	2.6
3	4 4 4 3 2 2 2 2 2	9	2.8
4	4 5 3 4 3 3	6	3.6
5	4 5 4 6 4	5	4.6
6	6 6 5 6 4 5	6	5.3
7	4 6 7	3	5.6
8			
9	7	1	7
10	9	1	9
11	11	1	11
12			
13			
14	10	1	10
		<hr/> 42	

Table 24: Household size during dry season and acreage of swamp rice farmed.

Plot size (acres)	Number of wives per household	Average number of wives per household
1	1 1 1	1
2	1 1 0 1 2 1	1
3	1 2 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	1.1
4	1 2 2 3 2 2	2
5	3 3 3 3 2	2.8
6	2 2 2 1 2 2	1.8
7	2 2 3	2.3
8		
9	1	1
10	3	3
11	2	2
12		
13		
14	3	3

Table 25: Number of wives per household and acreage of swamp rice farmed.

In view of this it is possible for a young man with his first wife to break from his natal domestic group and set up as an independent unit of production and consumption either by dint of singular exertion on their own or by soliciting the help of his wife's kin, his affines. In this respect then the developmental cycle differs radically in its integration with other domestic groups from that encountered in the upland situation as exemplified by the Mojiba households. The same considerations apply at the other end of the domestic group cycle wherein an old man and his last wife may manage a small rice plot with the aid of the latter's kin (Figure 37).

This pattern was anticipated in Chapter V in our analysis of the agricultural cycle of the domestic groups and is related of course to the factor of mechanical cultivation obviating the need for adult male labour and its corollary in the burden then placed on harvesting wherein either male or female labour is adequate. However, as in our analysis of the upland situation such considerations are not sufficient in themselves to account for the patterns that emerged and we had recourse to the modalities of the reallocation of resources, notably land, that is the system of land tenure. But before taking up this point it might be worthwhile to compare Figure 37 with the upland paradigm Figure 26. If the two paradigms are compared it is possible to appreciate graphically the different patterns existing in these two contexts respectively. At first they may appear to be radically different but this is not quite the case.

The fundamental process of domestic group expansion and

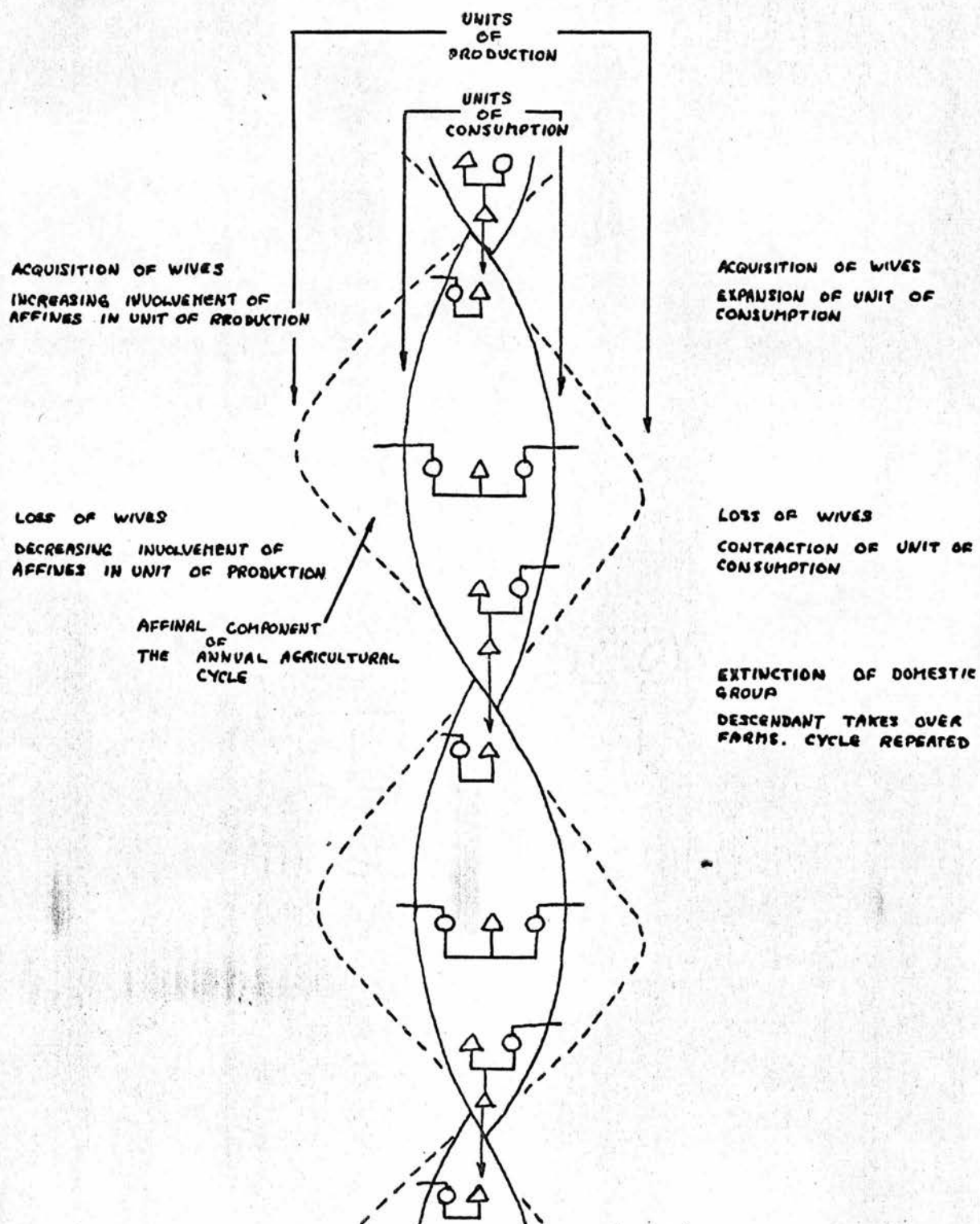


FIG 37 PARADIGM OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL CYCLE IN DOMESTIC GROUPS
(UNITS OF CONSUMPTION) (RIVERSIDE SYNDROME)

contraction, represented by the ellipses of the two paradigms, is present in both cases. However, in the idealised upland paradigm (Figure 26) fission does not occur while in the riverside case complete fission of domestic groups occurs quite early. In Figure 26 this is represented by a very long line of contact between successive domestic groups and in Figure 37 by a very short line of contact. The absolute case of minimal contact at a point is not empirically possible since every individual must spend a number of years until maturation with his or her natal domestic group.

As a result of this complete fission in the riverside case and corresponding loss of complementary domestic groups for the purposes of production, the riverside domestic groups resort, as we have seen, to affines, especially wives' cognates. This component is represented by the dotted line in Figure 37. As the diagram suggests and as we have seen empirically, this tends to exaggerate the process of expansion and contraction in the size of the domestic as a unit of production and hence gives rise to a correspondingly wide range of farm sizes.

However, the significance of the Gbap paradigm lies in its implications as regards the modalities of the redistribution of resources, that is, the system of land tenure. In particular it would appear that in Gbap there operates a rather different system from that revealed in Mojiba. Not only do the developmental and annual cyclical processes point to this but it has also been implied in our analysis of organization at other levels notably in the quasi-kulokwei of Gbap. In fact we

shall argue that, as regards the mechanically ploughed land, the burden of the system of land tenure, which in Mojiba forms a content of the kinship system, is to be found as an institution we have yet to analyse in detail namely the Rice Farmers' Marketing Co-operative. We shall attempt to show that the Gbap R.F.M.C. is, among other things but predominantly, a land holding corporate group and as such bears comparison with the upland kulokwei. However there is one significant difference in that the Co-operative Society, or combi in the vernacular, is what is usually described as a voluntary association while membership of a kulokwei is defined by kinship. Only when this factor is considered will we have a complete account of the patterns of social organization as analysed in Chapter V.

That the Gbap (and other Co-operative Societies concerned with mechanically cultivated swamp rice in this region) Co-operative Society is in fact a land holding corporation is a serious contention since most of the persons concerned appeared to consider it to be what it is called, that is, a Marketing Co-operative. It might then be appropriate to begin by examining its marketing function in some detail.

Table 26 shows the number of sellers marketing rice through Gbap Co-operative, according to the amount of rice marketed, in 1967. The table shows quite clearly that there are a number of sellers in the 10 to 40 bushel range with very few less than 10 and very few more than 40 though there are a number marketing more than a hundred bushels. Now it is expected that there will be a degree of correlation between the acreage farmed by a person and the amount of rice marketed by the

Number of bushels sold	Number of sellers
1-4	2
5	12
10	21
15	11
20	3
25	2
30	2
35	2
40	2
45	1
50	2
55	1
60	2
65	1
70	0
75	0
80	0
85	0
90	0
95	0
100+	4
	<hr/>
	68

Table 26: Amount of rice sold by number of sellers through Gbap Rice Farmers' Marketing Co-operative Society in 1967.

same person. Nevertheless a comparison of the 1967 figures for rice marketed with the size of the various plots farmed by the members of Gbap (Table 27) translated into ploughing costs in terms of rice is remarkable in the degree of coincidence (Figure 38). (In marketing rice it is quite common that in any one household both the husband and one of his wives, usually the senior, will market produce separately and under their own names. This usually occurs when the household is farming two or more separate plots where one of these plots will be given to one of the wives. Thus both T.J. Tucker and Siaka have separate plots one of which is held by their senior wives who is responsible for the ploughing fees. Hence in comparing the number of persons marketing certain quantities of rice with the cost of the ploughing fees in terms of bushels of rice we have taken the figures concerning the number of plots of a certain size and not the number of farming households and their total acreage).

The figures suggest that farmers are marketing no more rice than is required to pay for their ploughing fees and disposing of the surplus elsewhere. This is not, however, true of all the farmers, the graph shows that there is a small number of people marketing a considerable surplus of rice.

It will be recalled that formally the Rice Corporation and before that the Division of Agriculture ploughed for individuals and this is still reflected in their records which record acreage ploughed for single individuals. When, however, plots are not ploughed as units and the unit in this respect is a large site comprising number of plots the

Plot size (acres)	Number of plots
1	3
2	13
3	13
4	11
5	6
6	4
7	3
8	0
9	0
10	1
11	1
12	0
13	1
14	2
15	0
	<hr/> 58

Table 27: Plots of members of Gbap Rice Farmers' Marketing Co-operative Society on Gandema, Katin I and Gbonbesse sites, size and number, 1967.

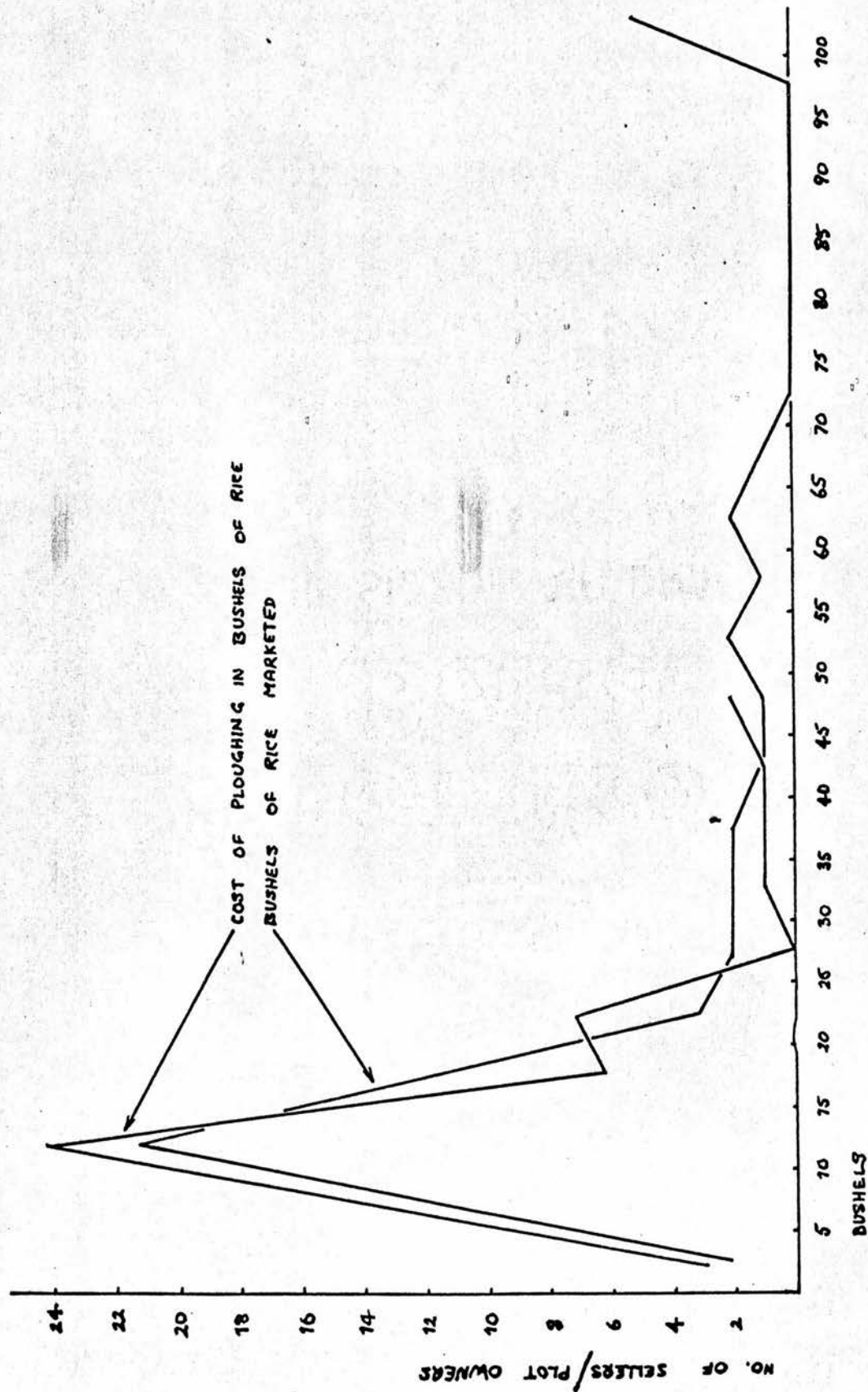


FIG 38 GRAPH SHOWING THE RELATION BETWEEN THE AMOUNT OF RICE MARKETED AND THE COST OF PLOUGHING FEES IN RICE

collection of fees for work done proved extremely difficult. After unsuccessfully attempting to organise the local Native Administration for this purpose the task was eventually taken up by the Co-operative Department of the Government who undertook to guarantee the Division of Agriculture payment. As before arrears built up and in 1966 the Rice Corporation again demanded the ploughing fees from the individual farmers and before work began. However, because of the organizational difficulties of collecting individual fees for single plots the local co-operatives undertook, in agreement with the Rice Corporation, to collect the fees from their members and hand them over in bulk to the Rice Corporation. It was also agreed that payment could be made in kind, that is rice. Thus in 1966, 1967, and 1968, when I left, the farmers at the end of the harvest handed rice to their co-operative societies where it was collected and then handed over to the Rice Corporation who started ploughing in April. It can be seen that the Rice Corporation is not now dealing with individual plot owners but with a collectivity, namely the co-operative society. This procedure is also in accord with the organization of ploughing and the layout of plots on the sites wherein, as we have seen, the plots of the members of any single co-operative are contiguous and integral parts of a unitary whole site. The significant point about this system is that it prescribes that each farmer must sell to the co-operative society at least an amount of rice equal to the cost of the ploughing fees for his plot of mechanically cultivated land. In 1967 this amounted to £3 10s per acre or $3\frac{1}{2}$ bushels of raw husk rice.

The general figures would appear to confirm that for the majority of the members this is indeed what happens and if individual

examples are examined this is confirmed. John Try with 2 acres marketed 7 bushels of rice in 1967; T. J. Tucker with a 6 acres plot marketed $15\frac{1}{2}$ bushels and his senior wife marketed 18 bushels holding a 4 acre plot; Somana with 4 acres marketed 14 bushels; Nemahu with $3\frac{1}{2}$ acres marketed 13 bushels. However, in contrast, Kaba marketed no less than 113 bushels with only 6 acres and the trader 180 bushels with only 13 acres. Vandi sold 68 bushels from 11 acres; Sam 59 bushels from 14 acres and Lamina $24\frac{1}{2}$ bushels from 5 acres. These specific cases relate to the three elements that the graph revealed. Firstly, a large number of farmers selling rice through the co-operative merely to pay for their ploughing fees; secondly, a few, like Vandi, who marketed rice not only to pay their ploughing fees but also to acquire cash from the surplus over subsistence requirements and, thirdly, a few persons marketing considerably more than the surplus over subsistence than their plot acreage could produce.

Such features point to several interesting and relevant implications but for the moment let us consider to what extent the Gbap Co-operative Society may be considered to be a marketing society only by reviewing the situation so far. In the first place the Rice Corporation does not, in effect, plough land for individuals; it ploughs large unitary sites such as Gandema, Katin I, Bullom and so on. In return they receive a lump sum, or rather a quantity of rice equivalent to such an amount, from the Co-operative Societies whose members farm the blocs of land which are often, though not always completely, congruent with the ploughed sites. Thus Katin II site and Bullom site are wholly occupied by farmers from Katin and Bullom Co-operative Societies respectively.

On Gandema site as we have seen, Solon-Petewoma Co-operative has a bloc as have Gbap and Tormagbagbahu. Not all the Gbap Co-operative members are on Gandema, there is a small overspill onto Katin I (seven farmers) and onto Gbongbesse (three farmers). Similarly there is an overspill of four Yile farmers onto Gandema while the rest are on Gbongbesse site. Finally farmers acquire their ploughed land through the Co-operative associated with the site where his plot is located by giving to the co-operative the appropriate amount of rice. Thus in the general organizational pattern and in the ostensible marketing operations, the co-operatives would appear to function as land holding corporate groups. This, it is suggested is confirmed by a consideration of the processes of land allocation, the settlement of disputes relating to plot ownership and the locus of authority and decision making in matters relating to the mechanically cultivated sites. Such fields of action are clearly beyond the scope of the Rice Farmers Marketing Co-operative Society if, as the descriptive title suggests, it is purely a marketing institution.

Disputes regarding the title to mechanically cultivated plots are heard and settled by the co-operative societies. Or more accurately the committee of the co-operative society. Unfortunately at no time during my period in the field did such a dispute arise in Gbap Co-operative Society nor any other that I was acquainted with. However, the Co-operative Department records contained several examples of such land tenure cases. In the field I had resort to posing hypothetical cases to informants and each one said that in the case of a dispute involving mechanical cultivated plots they would go to the

combi (the co-operative society).

The following example is taken from the records of Batahol Rice Farmers Marketing Co-operative Society.¹ One Kongo Bangura farmed 10 acres on Batahol site. He wished to visit some kinsmen elsewhere in another chiefdom for a considerable time and he therefore asked the Batahol Co-operative Society to look after his plot in his absence. However, on his return he discovered that the co-operative society had allocated his plot to another member. This person had in fact exchanged his 8 acre plot for Bangura's 10 acre plot with the sanction and agreement of the Co-operative Committee. At a Committee Meeting to reconsider the issue instigated by Bangura, the Committee were advised by the Area Co-operative Inspector to give Bangura back his plot. The Committee however, refused and reiterated the original settlement. Bangura then sent a letter to the Assistant Registrar of Co-operatives in Bo appealing to him to reinstate himself in his former 10 acre plot. The Assistant Registrar ratified the Batahol Committee's decision.

In another case concerning Batahol Co-operative the Committee decided to reallocate a five acre plot and divide the crop of the current year. This was done in the presence of the President of Batahol Co-operative and his committee, the President of Katin Co-operative and two of this committee and the President of Tormagbagbahu Co-operative and some thirty ordinary members of Batahol Co-operative.

1. These records are in the office of the Co-operative Area Officer, Bonthe, Bonthe District, Sierra Leone.

Finally at an Annual General Meeting of Garinga Rice Farmers Marketing Co-operative Society a resolution was passed "that any member found guilty of illicit marketing (selling rice to persons other than the Co-operative Society) should lose his allocated acreage and that it should be given to the other members."

The Co-operative Society not only mobilizes to deal with disputes concerning the mechanically ploughed land, it also makes administrative decisions such as, for example, the date when the straw on the site will be burned prior to ploughing. The significance of this lies in the fact that the individual plots are contiguous and hence as in ploughing, the site must be burned as a unit. If individuals were to fire their own plots as they finished harvesting the blaze would inevitably spread to other plots where harvesting may yet be uncompleted and hence destroy that farmers rice. In 1968 on Gandema site J. P. Tucker's plot was the last to complete harvesting and towards the end pressure was brought to bear on him to speed up his harvesting in order to allow the site to be fired. Such decisions and actions are taken by the committee of the Co-operative in the name of the members.

Such instances as presented here are I think, to avoid labouring the point, sufficient to allow us to consider the Co-operative as a land holding corporate group and it is therefore this institution that must be compared with the upland kulokwei. But before proceeding further let us take up some of the issues raised by the pattern of rice marketing in Gbap Co-operative Society and at the same time examine, through the persons of the committee, how it fits in with other aspects

of Gbap village organization.

The committee of Gbap Co-operative Society, which adjudicates in land disputes among members, represent the society's interests to other societies, the Rice Corporation and the Co-operative Department of the Government, is comprised of some of the personalities we have already encountered in Gbap. Committee members are elected at a General Meeting for three years of office and are eligible for re-election. From 1960 to 1966 the committee was made up as follows; Ama (President), Lansana (Vice-president) and Lamina, all of whom we have met as belonging to njelama neighbourhood group. The other members of the committee were Sam and Solomon Trinity of katawoveihu neighbourhood, and Esther Tucker and Tommy Kong (the latter from Mofan village.) In 1966 there were some changes in which Lansana emerged as President, Kaba as Vice-president and the wife of Siaka replacing Esther Tucker. In effect the committee was made up of the elders (kpakuisia) of the two quasi-kulokwei which we have already described in some detail.

The emergence of Kaba as a committee member is an interesting example of politico-economic machinations within the village. Kaba has cropped up already several times. In the first place, he was the only person in Gbap whose household was simultaneously engaged in upland farming and swamp rice farming until 1968. In this, however, he differed distinctly from other households elsewhere engaged in both syndromes as, for example, the Batahol households. In the latter case they are households which have extended their upland activities to include swamp rice farming. In the case of Kaba we have a household that has extended

its swamp rice farming activities and included some upland farming. This gives him an all year round supply of cassava and cassava stems for planting. Furthermore he was able to trade this produce with villagers growing cassava only on the levee whose supplies are necessarily intermittent, for cash and hence economic and political influence.

Kaba is also one of the members of the Gbap Co-operative Society who marketed more than one hundred bushels of rice in 1967. The others were the resident trader in Gbap, the trader from the next village Bullom and one Brimawo Tucker of Motifo who sold no less than 212 bushels to the co-operative society. The latter is an extraordinary old man who is reputed to be the richest man in the chiefdom and is of considerable importance in the affairs of the chiefdom. Kaba is, then, in the same league as some influential persons and is indeed involved with the Gbap trader whose economic influence is matched by the antipathy of the villagers towards him. The trader though a member of the Co-operative has, then, never been elected to the committee. However, because of his interest in the launch (M. L. Gbap Co-operation) owned by the Co-operative Society he finds it useful and necessary to have someone on the committee to represent his interests. However Kaba is unwilling to allow this association to go too far since he himself might lose any sympathy he has with the villagers. It is perhaps with this in mind that he is engaged in arranging a marriage between himself and one of Sam's daughters.

Meanwhile, to get back to the pattern of rice marketing, what is now becoming apparent is that a number of villagers are selling

their surplus rice to Kaba, the trader and to other similar persons. The Paramount Chief, for example, is another similar buyer. The context in which this occurs is as follows. The co-operative buys rice from its members at the official buying price¹ (then £1 per bushel of raw husk rice), and though this is deposited with the co-operative society in March the cash is not paid over until much later. In 1967 it was given to the sellers on production of their receipts as late as September. Many of the farmers are, however, in need of ready cash and hence sell to Kaba, the trader and others at prices as low as 10s per bushel but with the advantage of receiving immediate cash. The latter then market this rice through the co-operative society eventually receiving £1 per bushel. Not only is there a desire for immediate cash but in most cases members are indebted to the co-operative society and if rice were marketed through the co-operative the debt would be deducted at source from the monies due for the rice received.

This abuse could of course be obviated if the co-operative societies paid out cash immediately for rice received. However they are unable to do so until they in turn receive cash from the Rice Corporation to whom the rice is sold. The Rice Corporation must wait until the demand for rice pushes the price up to the level of the official buying price. This level is not reached until the period immediately prior to the beginning of the harvest of the upland rice in October.

1. Sierra Leone Government, Report of the Commission appointed to Enquire into and Report on Matters Contained in the Director of Audit's Report on the Accounts of Sierra Leone for the Year 1960-61 and the Government Statement Thereon, Freetown, Government Printer, 1963.

We must now, having examined the village organization including the Co-operative Society or combi relate them to the pattern of household dynamics as presented in the analysis of the agricultural cycle and developmental cycle.

The most significant factor is the nature of recruitment or qualifications for membership of the land holding corporation, the combi. They are as laid out in the Marketing Co-operative Society Bye Laws. To be considered a member of kulokwei a person must not only reside on the territory of the kulokwei but he must also show consanguineous ties with the present members and hence the kulokwei ancestors. In the case of the combi the latter criterion is absent though the former is, significantly enough, incorporated. Thus "Any person who is (among other things) resident within or in occupation of land within the area of operations of the society shall be eligible for membership but no person may claim membership as of right." Thus the analytical distinction made between rights to land and the system of kinship in the kulokwei or upland situation is in the riverside situation empirical and kinship becomes divorced from the property complex as it relates to land, specifically mechanically cultivated land, but which is, however, the principal and often sole resource of the riverside households. It follows then that in the riverside case affines and even non-kin are potential categories in the processes of fission and accretion that occur annually in accordance with the demands of the agricultural cycle, categories that are necessarily ruled out by the kulokwei system of the upland as we have seen. In the riverside situation where the property content of kinship relations is absent in relation to land tenure it follows that the

particular configuration of the agricultural cycle is the result of a number of factors which will include the affective content of kinship links, the availability of certain categories of kin and so on. Herein we find the reason for the general pattern of the riverside agricultural cycle as described in Chapter V.

Secondly the factor of mechanized ploughing (or brushing), while not an immediate cause, certainly contributes to the conditions making for the differential processes we have encountered. It does so in two ways. Customarily 'brushing' is the operation that converts rights to land into possession of farmland and it is this operation which is regarded as critical in the upland syndrome in establishing the viability of producing/consuming units. Now in the riverside syndrome this burden falls on the harvesting operation and participation in this activity has no ownership connotations but is a matter of reciprocal rights and obligations concerning manpower among kinsmen and hence the involvement of affines and non-kin is thus freed from any problematic consideration of property rights relating to the land. Furthermore, as we have seen mechanical cultivation has allowed for the early fission, in developmental terms, of male cognates who come to manage their own units of production by going outside the cognatic kindred for manpower to overcome the critical producing operation of harvesting. But the corollary of this process is then, that they are forced to go to their affines since they are all facing the same shortage simultaneously. A father with a mechanically cultivated rice plot who goes to his son who is similarly engaged for help in harvesting is likely to meet the latter coming to his own farm with a similar request. Nevertheless such a complete

divorce of kinship and property is not possible in practice and we find that though male cognates contributed only 18% to the manpower increase as the riverside domestic group moves into the critical producing phase of harvesting this was three times as much as the male affinal component.

Before moving on to deal with the Batahol case by way of concluding this chapter certain points raised by the Gbap domestic group developmental cycle should be cleared up. It has been remarked frequently that while upland farming households may often extend their agricultural interests to include swamp rice farming this occurs less often in reverse, that is riverside or swamp rice farming households seldom extend their activities to include some upland farming. In Gbap for example in 1967 there was only one such household, Kaba's so engaged though in 1968 he was joined by two other Gbap households, Vandt's and John Tucker's. This phenomenon can be related to two factors. First of all riverside domestic groups committed in the first instance to swamp rice cultivation undergo the processual cyclical development as summarised in Figure 37. This paradigm is characterised by, as we have seen, early fission among male cognates and a reliance on female affinal manpower. Such a composition is, however, inimical with the requirements of the shifting cultivation techniques of the upland farming syndrome. Secondly even if this problem were surmounted the household head would then have to deal with the problem of asserting and exercising rights in an upland kulokwei. Kaba has, however, been able to produce cassava on the upland by virtue of kinship on his mother's side to the land of the now abandoned village (tomboya) of Mopaala which is conveniently near Gbap. Secondly being literate in Arabic and a Moslem he has, as a teacher (kamo),

acquired young men as pupils (kaalopoi) who become effective members of his household. Musu who is married, is unrelated to Kaba, but an effective member of his household as a kaalopoi. Similarly Abu his father's wife's sister's son would not normally be a member of his household. Vandi who made a cassava farm at Mopaala in 1968 acquired the land through Kaba and at the same time augmented his household for this purpose by coming to an agreement with one Tommywo, an adult man who for various reasons finds himself with no wives and domestic group of his own, wherein Tommywo becomes part of Vandi's household (and would be described as keikpla, one-who-sits-near) and Vandi pays his annual tax (£1 10s).

Secondly we have argued that there is considerable variation in domestic group size according to the phase in the developmental process of the domestic group and that this corresponds to a large extent with variations in plot size. In this situation there are two possible courses of events. As the domestic group grows or decreases in size there is a corresponding enlargement or reduction of a specific plot associated with a given domestic group. Such a procedure would require the continual remeasurement and redrawing of plot boundaries. Or alternately the plots remain fixed and the household moves to a plot commensurate with its requirements. In practice both procedures take place though on the whole there is little attempt at redrawing plot boundaries and households tend to move. In one of the cases of land ownership referred to above it was noted that one of the litigants had moved from an eight acre plot to a ten acre plot. On the other hand if a unitary plot of the required size does not fall vacant the household

head may acquire a smaller plot elsewhere that would in conjunction with his current plot total the acreage he required. Hence we find single households with two separate plots on the same site. A declining domestic group may, however, be unwilling to abandon its present plot to acquire a smaller acreage elsewhere if it has planted say bananas on the komboya adjacent to its plot. In this case the household will sub-let, as it were, an acre or two of its plot to another household requiring such land. Thus Kati has given one acre of her four acre plot to Lami. In such reallocations the ploughing agency takes no part and indeed during my period in the field I saw no surveying of the land by the Rice Corporation in two ploughing seasons; plot boundaries are tacitly accepted by both the Rice Corporation and farmers as immutable. In such allocations as Kati and Lami the procedure is quite crude. In order to measure off a strip of Kati's four acre plot equal to one acre a plot whose area was known to be one acre was found and its width marked on a string. This was then taken to Kati's plot and used to mark the boundary between Lami's one acre and Kati's three acres by measuring in from one of the boundaries. No attempt was made to allow for varying lengths of plot. In such a case of 'sub-letting' Lami does not of course give rice or cash to the Co-operative but to Kati who pays for the ploughing of the total four acres. Only her name is recorded in the site allocation lists. It is interesting to note that the relationship between Kati and Lami vis a vis this piece of land was expressed in terms of kinship when in fact no such link exists. No such attempt, however, is made within the context of the Gbap Co-operative Society as a whole. The members do not express their relationship to each other vis a vis the 'estate' of the corporate group, that is land, in terms of kinship. The divorce

of this land from kinship is complete: the President and committee do not, when the occasion arises, address the members as 'brothers' but as memblesia - a corruption of the English word 'members'.

In our analysis of the Batahol domestic groups (Chapter V) the following features emerged in relation to the upland (Mojiba) domestic groups and the riverside (Ghap) domestic groups. First of all the Batahol domestic groups, that is units of consumption, showed an average size greater than either Ghap or Mojiba domestic groups considering adults only. In particular it appears that the Batahol household heads have, on average, a greater number of wives, (Table 28).

Secondly when the dynamics of the Batahol agricultural cycle were examined it was shown that it incorporated features of both the Mojiba case and the Ghap case. That is, there was a high increment in the cognatic component as in Mojiba (but unlike Ghap) and an increment in the affinal component as in Ghap (but unlike Mojiba). Having now considered in detail the wider social context of the Ghap and Mojiba households these features of the Batahol domestic groups suggest that there is operating there a compound of both the riverside system and upland system. To a certain extent this is the case, but since these two systems are mutually exclusive we must consider the Batahol situation in some more detail. But first let us deal with the average size of the Batahol domestic groups.

This characteristic is not now unexpected and is accountable in terms of our analysis so far. As regards the riverside domestic

	Average number of wives per domestic group
Batahol	2.3
Gbap	1.8
Mojiba	1.4

Table 28: Average number of wives in the domestic groups of Batahol, Gbap and Mojiba.

groups we have argued that the achievement of viability as units of production is related to the female and in particular affinal female (wives) category within the domestic group. In other words it is the number of wives a household head commands that determines whether he can move into independent production of swamp rice and to what extent. This consideration will apply mutatis mutandis and hence in the Batahol domestic group we have a congery of upland domestic groups where household heads have a higher average number of wives, a resource which cannot be used to expand production in the upland syndrome but which does allow them to exploit the potential of the mechanically cultivated riverain grasslands.

In considering the cognatic increment in the agricultural cycle of the Batahol domestic group it must be borne in mind that such persons are also a part of the producing unit which is involved in the upland syndrome of agricultural activities and hence if the unit of production also engages in swamp rice cultivation it follows that they too appear in this situation. But there is possibly another factor contributing to the higher increment of cognates than is found in the Gbap domestic group cycle and this relates again to the question of land tenure. As in Gbap, the Co-operative Society, in this case the Batahol Rice Farmers Marketing Co-operative, is a land holding corporate group where jurisdiction extends over the large Batahol site. But this authority it seems is maintained with some difficulty and only with the repeated intervention of the officials of the Co-operative Department of the Government, usually the Co-operative Area Officer in Bonthe and his Inspectors. While land disputes in other Co-operatives are usually

settled by the committee of the particular Co-operative, in Batahol many of these disputes reach the files of the Co-operative Department as a result of repeated appeals against decisions of the Batahol Committee. Two factors are relevant here. First of all Batahol Rice Farmers Marketing Co-operative is characterised by the diversity of villages from which its members come from, unlike Gbap Co-operative where the bulk of the members are also Gbap villagers. In the latter case, as we have seen, the Co-operative Committee Members are also the village elders (kpakuisia) which is not the case in Batahol. Secondly there is a tendency for the Batahol plots to become incorporated into the estate of the farmers' kulokwei: many of the households acquired their plots through cognatic kinsmen and either give rice to this person according to the acreage or else by-pass the Co-operative and hand over rice directly to the Rice Corporation by way of ploughing fees. In such a situation then the system of land tenure and its implication as regards the cyclical processes of the domestic groups as analysed in Mojiba will apply also to Batahol and hence in part contribute in accounting for the higher increment of cognates than was found in the agricultural cycle of other riverside domestic groups, namely those of Gbap.

In this Chapter we have presented a descriptive analysis of the social organisation of a riverside community. The burden of our argument has been concerned with demonstrating how the property content, defined as the system of land tenure, has been divested from the system of kinship. That is, that they are empirically distinct while in the upland situation analysed in the previous chapter this distinction

could be made only at the analytical level and that they were empirically and conceptually an integral system. Land tenure was seen to come under the jurisdiction of a corporate group labelled combi in the vernacular and officially as the Rice Farmers' Marketing Co-operative Societies. This localised corporate group unlike the upland kulokwei does not recruit members by consanguineous kinship. This feature in conjunction with the factor of mechanical cultivation gives rise to a particular pattern in the cyclical changes of the riverside domestic groups wherein the system of kinship operated along particular lines unaffected by the factor of property. The heterogeneous and general configuration that results at both the level of the dynamics of the domestic groups and of congeries of domestic groups as neighbourhoods contrasts with the cognatic and specific configurations at the same levels in the upland context. A further point that lends weight to this analysis is the frequently uttered desire of members of the combi that the combi should become responsible through its members for the burial of deceased fellow members, a function at present everywhere dealt with by the system of kinship and appropriate where this is integral with the constellation of the land and the ancestors.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS

In this work we have attempted to assess the significance of ecology and social structure in organising the behaviour of the Sewa Mende people. We may conclude that E. R. Leach's postulate that 'economics is prior to kinship' has been validated but with certain reservations.

In Chapter V it was shown that the domestic group organization of the Sewa Mende varied according to the predominant agricultural syndrome which in turn relates to the various ecological zones of the region. However the particular characteristics of the organizational patterns could not be accounted for completely in terms of ecology as Leach's formulation would suggest. On the contrary, we had recourse to a detailed consideration of the system of kinship and affinity and the structure of Sewa Mende collective representations in general. Both 'economics' and 'kinship' determine what people do.¹

In the course of this exposition certain substantial issues were touched upon, the implications of which should perhaps be dealt with in conclusion. They concern the developmental and other cycles in the domestic group and the system of property in the context of which

1. cf. M. Mauss, *Essai sur les variations saisonnières des sociétés Eskimos. Etude de morphologie sociale.* L'Année sociologique, Vol. 9, 1905, p.91.

some remarks were made with reference to the work of J. Goody. Since this issue is of some significance in the analysis and argument and since the implications of Goody's work is somewhat opposed to that presented here some further comment might be pertinent.

It will be recalled that in Chapter VI we argued that in the upland situation as exemplified by the Mojiba households, the fission of households as a result of the long term developmental cycle as well as the annual processes of fission and accretion in the agricultural cycle were, among other things, determined by singularly economic and practical considerations. Individual domestic groups combined for the purposes of production only if they would economically benefit by such an action. Jural rules concerning rights to property, in particular land, are a necessary but not sufficient condition. Goody however argues that, at least among the LoDagaa, though his analysis has general implications, that the processes of fission are determined by jural rules.

The LoDagaa comprise two distinguishable communities which Goody describes as the LoWiili and LoDagaba. Among the LoDagaba he finds that "fission occurs at an earlier stage in the domestic group cycle both in fraternal and paternal groups. It is not only a question of eldest sons breaking away from fathers to set up their own productive units but also of full brothers separating at an earlier stage in the developmental cycle of the domestic group."¹ The answer is "the matrilineal inheritance of wealth (gbandiru). The LoDagaa are quite

1. Goody, 1958, op. cit., P. 69.

explicit about this process. They say that a father will deliberately oust ('o) his senior son for his own good, keeping the junior son to farm with him. The reason is this. When a man dies his wealth is inherited by a member of his matriclan and because of the rule of exogamy this can never be one of his sons. If therefore the sons were to continue to farm with their father, they will certainly fill his granaries and give him a good surplus which he can sell to buy livestock. But when he dies, this surplus is claimed by the uterine heir and the sons have no claim on the goods which have been bought with the sweat of their brows. Consequently it is of advantage to the sons to have their own granaries and to build up their own flocks."¹ Goody argues that the organizational differences in the two communities are the result of differing structural features. Ecology does not figure in this scheme at all despite the fact that there are ecological differences between the LoWiili and the LoDagaba.²

Furthermore the following points are noteworthy in an otherwise convincing analysis. First of all it answers only the question of earlier father-son fission and not that of full brother's. Goody's hypothesis here is not in terms of property relations: "the difficulties created by (migrant labour) appear to lead to earlier fission of full brother's"³ and, in comparing the LoDagaba and the LoWiili, it is Goody's "strong impression that among the former trips are made more

1. ibid., P.69.

2. ibid., PP. 62-64.

3. ibid., P.71.

frequently, for a longer duration and by a larger proportion of the inhabitants."¹

Secondly the significance of the uterine heir who inherits the wealth, or movable property, of the deceased is of some importance in Goody's argument and this is in turn related to the importance of wealth among the LoDagaa. Now in the subsistence economy of the LoDagaa such wealth cannot amount to much and though they are described as investing the surplus in livestock they are introduced as hoe cultivators like the Tallensi and not as pastoralists.² I would suggest that the bulk of the goods inherited by the uterine heir consist of the produce of the current agricultural year, that is, the grain in the granary and the crops in the fields and not as seems to be implied, the cumulative total of the product of the sweat of the sons' brows. The bulk of their effort will have gone into food, clothing and shelter which they themselves will have consumed over the years.

Finally the problem created through the matrilineal inheritance of wealth which is resolved by the device of earlier fission along paternal lines turns out to be more apparent than real. The granary from which the uterine heir will claim his inheritance is, in fact, empty, the contents are already in the hands of the widow and her children.³ Facing this problem Goody argues that this is yet another procedure on the part of the father to protect his sons. If the uterine heir were a

1. ibid., P.71.

2. ibid., P.62.

3. ibid., PP. 72-78.

'good' man he would leave sufficient to support the widows and orphans until the next harvest. "But not all men display this generosity and handing over control of a larger amount of grain to the wife serves to protect her and her children from such an eventuality."¹

Such points may only be a question of Goody's exposition or they relate to a more fundamental weakness in Goody's analysis. It is cogent to point out that Goody's approach is derived in general from the theory of unilineal descent and in particular from the notion that "death, precipitating the problem of inheritance, also precipitates the expression in customary acts of conflicts involved in the transmission of relatively exclusive rights from one generation to the next."² While such an approach may be valid in the analysis of the LoDagaa social system it would be misleading in the Sewa Mende context. While death there does precipitate a problem of inheritance, the property involved is essentially a residue. The more significant rights relating to land are not in evidence.

The key distinction is that made between 'farms' on the one hand and 'land' on the other. We have attempted to show that farms, like their associated domestic groups are essentially ephemeral. As the domestic group dissolves so do the farms until with the death of the household and its final dissolution, there is nothing left to inherit and hence there is no crisis of property transmission from one generation

1. ibid., P.78.

2. ibid., P.57; see also Goody, 1962, op. cit., P.328 et. sqq.

to the next. Land on the other hand is, unlike farms, not only immutable and permanent but is also, relative to a farm, an inert resource and is of little immediate value economically. But it is out of land that farms are made and herein lies its value. Rights to land are a matter of the system of kinship which is equally immutable and permanent and in itself inert. The action of converting land into a farm, that is exploiting the potential of the land is simultaneously a process of exploiting a specific configuration of the system of kinship with which any Ego is endowed with at birth, and not on the death of a person of the previous generation. Paralleling the process of converting 'land' into 'farm' is the change at the level of kinship wherein the latter is converted into discrete localised corporate groups. The territorial aspect, as the restricting factor in the formation of corporate groups is sublimated and appears as the mawe and kulokwei. Only when the integral nature of kinship and land, farms and localised descent groups is realised can the inalienable character of Sewa Mende land be appreciated. Though farms may be pledged the land that the farm stands on may not. Land cannot be given a value and sold because the elements of the system of kinship cannot be valued and sold. This is not to say that Ego cannot sell a section of land because other persons also have rights to ownership: Ego is unable to sell the land because he cannot sell his consanguineous kin relations. But where rights to land are divested from the system of kinship, as on the mechanically cultivated grasslands the land is bought and sold. Farmers here do not talk of 'paying ploughing fees' but of 'buying' (ngeya) their plots from the ploughing authority.

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